



# Cumbria Opera Group

- PRESENTS -

## OUTDOOR OPERA

- BOTH DAYS -  
FEATURING

SWALLOWS &  
ARMENIANS  
WORLD PREMIERE

FOLLOWED BY  
ARMENIAN  
CIRCLE DANCE

SHAKESPEARE'S  
ARIEL -  
A ONE-PERSON  
OPERA

WITH OPERA  
HIGHLIGHTS  
- FROM -  
MOZART,  
VERDI &  
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POSTER BY @TEDHISLOP.ART

### 9<sup>th</sup> AND 10<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022

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The Cumbria Opera Group  
presents:

# **Outdoor Opera at Battlebarrow House 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

Welcome to Battlebarrow House Gardens for the Cumbria Opera Group's weekend of Outdoor Opera!

Ice creams and drinks are available to purchase from stewards, and toilet facilities are available.

We hope you enjoy the day!

Programme:

16:00-17:00 - *Swallows and Armenians*

17:00-18:00 - Opera Highlights Recital

18:00-19:00 - *Ariel*

# ***Swallows and Armenians***

## **16:00-17:00, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

Adapted from the book by Karen Babayan, with source material from Arthur Ransome

Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* is a classic book about children having adventures on a lake. The Walker family have always been depicted as quintessentially English in the book, film and TV adaptations of the story; but what is not widely known is that Ransome modelled his characters on the Altounyans, an Anglo-Armenian family from Aleppo, Syria. *Swallows and Armenians* reinstates the cultural diversity of the children who inspired Ransome, delving into the very special relationship between the two families that also, spectacularly fell apart.

This fascinating story of friendship and family, love and jealousy, with a good measure of sailing thrown in, has been brought to life by a multicultural cast whose own diverse backgrounds and family migration stories mirror that of the Altounyan children. This project reappraises a children's classic, uncovering and celebrating the ethnic richness of British culture.

*Swallows and Armenians* began life in 2017 as a small exhibition, and rapidly grew into a book of short stories, painstakingly researched through letters and diaries from the Arthur Ransome archive at the University of Leeds Special Collections. This was followed by a devised performance with local children at Theatre by the Lake, Keswick, an audiobook (available at [www.audible.com](http://www.audible.com)) and a touring exhibition across the north of England.

We are thrilled to have been commissioned by Cumbria Opera Group to create the newest addition to the *Swallows and Armenians* catalogue. In collaboration with **Persia Babayan-Taylor**, a director, actor-musician and composer, *Swallows and Armenians* has been adapted for the stage by Karen Babayan under the mentoring of award-winning playwright Mick Yates.

We are also pleased to present **Shakeh Major Tchilingirian**, an acclaimed choreographer and performer based in London who has accompanied the *Swallows and Armenians*' exhibition tour with her project *The Circle of Life* community dance event.

**Swallows and Armenians** is supported by Lottery Funding from Arts Council England.



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## **Karen Babayan (Author, *Swallows and Armenians*)**

Born in Iran to Armenian/British parents, Karen moved to the UK due to the impending Islamic Revolution in 1979. Latterly she lived in Leeds, a stone's throw from the house in which Arthur Ransome was born. She now lives in Appleby, Cumbria. An established, multi-disciplinary artist, writer and curator, Babayan has exhibited nationally and Internationally with work in many public collections

including Special Collections, Brotherton Library, University of Leeds; Leeds City Art Gallery; Harris Art Gallery, Preston; Tate Britain Library, London; Museum of Modern Art, New York and Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. In 2016 she gained a PhD, published her first book of short stories 'Blood Oranges Dipped in Salt', and was awarded C-Art Cumbria Artist of the Year. [www.karenbabayan.com](http://www.karenbabayan.com)



## **Persia Babayan-Taylor (Director, *Swallows and Armenians*)**

Persia Babayan-Taylor was born in Leeds to English and Armenian-Iranian parents, and grew up in Cumbria on the doorstep of the Lake District.

Persia trained at Guildford School of Acting, graduating with a First Class Honours degree. Beginning a varied career in the performance industry, Persia has worked as an actor and musician performing on screen and on stage in London's West End, as a composer creating music for theatre and short film, and as a producer and director.

Now working predominantly as a director, Persia has worked with notable venues and establishments such as Theatre by the Lake and Guildford School of Acting. In 2021 she produced and directed Actor-Musician theatre company Jupiter Theatre's regional tour of *Twelfth Night*, and directed Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*, the flagship opera of the inaugural Cumbria Opera Festival.

In 2022 Persia produced Jupiter Theatre's second regional theatre tour. In 2023, Persia is thrilled to be making her directing debut in documentary film-making and television.



## **Madeleine Wilshire (Musical Director and Composition Editor, *Swallows and Armenians*)**

Madeleine Wilshire is an actor, musician, composer and Musical Director who grew up in Cornwall, before training in Actor-Musicianship at the Guildford School of Acting.

Previous credits as a Musical Director include *Twelfth Night* (Jupiter Theatre), *The City* (Nicholson Upstage Theatre), *Cymbeline* (Jupiter Theatre), and *Goldilocks* (Guildford School of Acting). As a composer, previous credits include *Twelfth*

*Night, The City, Cymbeline, Tales of Ice and Snow* (Jupiter Theatre), and *Indebted* (short film).



## **Haroun Al-Jeddal (Roger)**

Haroun Al-Jeddal is a 2021 graduate of Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. TV includes multi-episodes of *Coronation Street* (ITV). Theatre includes *Broken Wings* (Charing Cross Theatre) and *Grease* (UK Tour). Theatre whilst training includes *Rent* (Lilac Yosiphon and Simon Hardwick); *New York* (Katie Henry), *The Love Of The Nightingale* (Richard Cant); *The Secret Garden* (Samuel Harjanne); *Jane Eyre* (Darren Lawrence). Other experience

includes *Bring It ON* (The BTA); *West Side Story* (FutureStages); *Imaginary* (NYMT); *The Battle Of Boat* (NYMT); *Peter Pan Goes Wrong* (Mischief Theatre); *Baby* and *We Lost Elijah* (National Theatre Connections).



## **Laura Andresen Guimarães (Susie)**

Laura Andresen is an Actor-Musician who graduated from Guildford School of Acting with first class honours in 2021. Since then she has made her professional debut in *Just So* at the Watermill Theatre.

Other training includes: Tring Park Performing Arts and the National Youth Choir.

Credits include: *Just So* (Watermill Theatre), *The Clockmaker's Daughter* in Concert (Cadogan Hall) *One Young World* (Royal Albert Hall), National Youth Training Choir Soloist (Royal Festival Hall, Royal Welsh), BBC1's *Pitch Battle* and Carly Paoli *Live at Cadogan Hall*.



### **David Haller (Arthur)**

David Haller is an Actor-Musician graduate from the Guildford School of Acting. He plays the Piano, Accordion and Percussion, and has also worked as a Musical Director, most recently on a production of *Indecent* by Paula Vogel with the BA/MA Actors at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. David is thrilled to be joining this exciting production with Cumbria Opera Group.



### **Hanna Khogali (Titty)**

Hanna Khogali's credits include: *Britannicus* (Lyric Hammersmith), *71 Coltman Street* (Hull Truck), *Snow White* (Theatre503), *Brief Encounter* (The Watermill Theatre), *You Bury Me* (Paines Plough), *Once* (UK Tour), *Centralia* (Arcola), *Swallows and Amazons* (York Theatre Royal), *Mozart* (UK Premiere), *Broken Wings* (The Other Palace), *'Saturday' Music Video* (Sam Fender), *Rags* (Hope Mill Theatre), *The Collection* (The Wallace Collection, Marylebone), *Moll Flanders* (Mercury Theatre), *Good Fit* (Southwark Playhouse), *The Lost Ones R&D* (The Bush) and *Daisy Pulls it Off* (Charing Cross).



### **Marina Papadopoulos (Taqi/Dora/Ada)**

Marina Papadopoulos is a graduate of the first cohort of BA Actor-Musicians from the Guildford School of Acting in 2018. Since graduating she has played various roles in actor-musician productions, such as 'VICKI' in the new musical *It's Different For Girls*, and family musicals; *The Three Kingdoms* and *The Fairy Who Fell Off The Christmas Tree*. Marina is a keen instrumentalist - playing piano, guitar, viola and drums, and is also an associate artist with Hull-based theatre company She Productions. She is delighted to be working with the Cumbria Opera Group this summer.



## Rian Wunderlin (Ernest)

Rian Wunderlin is a Swiss-Italian actor and has been a life long drummer, percussionist and singer before he classically trained to be an actor at East 15 Acting School from 2017-2020. He's played roles in classic, contemporary and devised plays/musicals and was part of the Motion Capture Summit in 2019 as a motion capture performer. Besides English, Rian speaks fluent Swiss German, German and some Italian/French.



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# Opera Highlights Recital

17:00-18:00, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Soprano - Holly Brown  
Tenor - Andrew Rawlings  
Piano - David Palmer

## 1. Verdi - 'La donna e mobile' from *Rigoletto*

The misogynist Duke of Mantua sings of his contempt for women, with little thought for the consequences of his actions.

*Women are as fickle  
as feathers in the wind,  
simple in speech,  
and simple in mind.  
Always the loveable,  
sweet, laughing face,  
but laughing or crying,  
the face is false for sure.*

*If you rely on her  
you will regret it,  
and if you trust her  
you are undone!  
Yet none can call himself  
fully contented  
who has not tasted  
love in her arms!*

## 2. Mozart - 'Dies Bildnis' from *Die Zauberflöte*

Tamino has just fallen in love with a picture of Pamina.

*This portrait of magical beauty,  
Like never an eye seen before  
I can feel, how this godlike effigy  
Fills my heart with new motion*

*This certain something I can't really  
name  
Yet I can feel it burn like a fire  
Could this sensation be love?  
Yes, none but love it must be..*

*O if I could but find her  
I wish that she already stood before  
me  
I'd be so pure and warm*

*What would I do ?  
I would with great delight  
Press her against my bosom  
And she'd be mine forevermore.*

## 3. Gimenez - 'La tarántula es un bicho muy malo' from *La Tempranica*

Grabié sings a traditional folk-song to a hunting party.

*The tarantula's an evil little critter  
You can't kill it with sticks or with  
stones  
For it runs off and hides in corners  
And it's sting is wicked*

*Ay mother! I don't know what's up  
with me  
Only yesterday  
I went into the threshing barn  
And now I'm shaking all over.  
I must have been stung  
By the nasty tarantula  
And now I'm really ill.  
Their blood is so bad  
May the devils eat one another!  
To hell with the spider  
That on its stomach  
Has a painted guitar!  
Dancing is the only cure for this  
terrible pain.  
Ay! Curse the spider that stung me!*

*I'm not afraid of thunderbolts or  
bullets  
I'm not afraid of the worse things  
My dad's done to me;  
He's more handsome than a cockerel  
But may that critter be struck by a  
bolt.*

*Ay mother, I've got it bad.  
I'm getting into one of those sweats  
That dries you up  
And gets you all scabby  
I must have been stung  
By the nasty tarantula  
And that's why I'm getting  
Thinner than a sardine.  
May the devils eat one another!  
To hell with the spider  
That on it's stomach  
Has a painted guitar!  
Dancing is the only cure for this  
terrible pain.  
Ay! Curse the spider that stung me!*

#### **4. Dvorak - 'Song to the Moon' from Rusalka**

Water Nymph Rusalka has fallen in love with a human Prince, and asks the moon to tell the Prince of her love.

*Moon, high and deep in the sky  
Your light sees far,  
You travel around the wide world,  
and see into people's homes.  
Moon, stand still a while  
and tell me where is my dear.  
Tell him, silvery moon,  
that I am embracing him.  
For at least momentarily  
let him recall of dreaming of me.  
Illuminate him far away,  
and tell him, tell him who is waiting for him!  
If his human soul is, in fact, dreaming  
of me,  
may the memory awaken him!  
Moonlight, don't disappear!*

#### **5. Lehar - 'Vilja-Lied' from The Merry Widow**

Hanna entertains her party guests with a story about a fairy who enchants a hunter.

#### **6. Lehar - 'Love unspoken' from The Merry Widow**

Hanna and Danilo finally declare their love for each other.

#### **7. Bernstein - 'Tonight' from West Side Story**

Maria and Tony plan a brighter future together,

#### **8. Bizet - 'La fleur que tu m'avais jetée' from Carmen**

Don José loves Carmen and is upset by her mockery of him.

*The flower which you have thrown me,  
I kept with me inside my prison,  
Withered and dry, this flower,  
Hath always retained its sweet smell,  
And throughout the entire hours,  
I would close my eyes and sniff it,  
I would get drunk with this smell,  
And during the night, I had visions of you!  
I began to curse you,  
To detest you, asking myself:  
"O why has destiny placed  
The flower upon my shirt?"*

*Then, I accused myself of blasphemy,  
And I felt within myself nothing,  
Save one single desire,  
one single desire, one single hope,  
To see thee again, O Carmen, to see thee again!  
For you had only to appear afore me,  
And to throw one glance at me,  
To take possession of my whole being.  
O my Carmen!  
And I was yours!  
Carmen, I love you!*

#### **9. Verdi - 'De miei bollenti spiriti' from La traviata**

Alfredo reflects on the beautiful life he's built in the countryside with Violetta.

*My passionate spirit  
And the fire of youth  
Are tempered by the  
Gentle smile of her love.  
Since the day when she told me  
"I want to live, faithful to you alone!"  
I have forgotten the world  
And lived like one in heaven*

#### **10. Charpentier - 'Depuis le jour' from Louise**

Louise sings of her newfound happiness, living with her lover Julien.

*Since the day I gave myself  
my destiny seems all flower-strewn  
I think I'm dreaming under a fairy sky  
my soul still intoxicated by your first kiss!  
What a beautiful life!  
My dream wasn't a dream!  
Oh! I'm so happy!  
Love is spreading its wings over me!  
In the garden of my heart  
sings a new joy!*

*Everything is vibrant  
everything rejoices at my triumph!  
All around me everything is smiling  
light and joy!  
And I'm trembling delightfully  
from the charming memory  
of the first day  
of love!*

*What a beautiful life!  
Oh! I'm so happy! ...utterly happy!  
And I'm trembling delightfully  
from the charming memory  
of the first day  
of love!*

## 11. Puccini - 'Si, mi chiamano Mimi' from *La bohème*

Mimi talks about herself and her dreams to Rodolfo, who has just confessed his love.

*Yes, they call me Mimi  
but my true name is Lucia.  
My story is short.  
I embroider canvas or a silk  
at home and outside...  
I am happy and at peace  
and my pastime  
is to make lilies and roses.  
I love all things  
that have gentle sweet smells,  
that speak of love, of spring,  
of dreams and fanciful things,  
those things that have poetic names ...  
Do you understand me?*

*They call me Mimi,  
I do not know why.  
Alone, I make  
lunch by myself.  
I do not go to church,  
but I pray a lot to the Lord.  
I stay all alone  
there in a white room  
and look upon the roofs and the sky  
but when the thaw comes  
The first sun, like my  
first kiss, is mine!  
Buds in a vase...  
Leaf and leaf I spy!  
That gentle perfume of a flower!  
But the flowers that I make,  
Alas! no smell.  
Other than telling you about me, I know  
nothing.  
I am only your neighbor who comes out  
to bother you at this impossible hour.*

## 11. Puccini - 'O soave fanciulla' from *La bohème*

Mimi and Rodolfo realise they are in love, minutes after meeting each other.

*RODOLFO  
Oh! lovely girl! Oh, sweet face  
bathed in the soft moonlight.  
I see in you the dream  
I'd dream forever!*

*MIMI  
(Ah! Love, you rule alone!...)*

*RODOLFO  
Already I taste in spirit  
The heights of tenderness!*

*MIMI  
(You rule alone, O Love!)*

*RODOLFO  
Already I taste in spirit  
the heights of tenderness!  
Love trembles in our kiss!*

*MIMI  
(How sweet his praises  
enter my heart ...  
Love, you alone rule!)  
Rodolfo kisses her.  
No, please!*

*RODOLFO  
You're mine!*

*MIMI  
Your friends are waiting.*

*RODOLFO  
You send me away already?*

*MIMI  
I daren't say what I'd like ...*

*RODOLFO  
Tell me.*

*MIMI  
If I came with you?*

*RODOLFO  
What? Mimi!  
It would be so fine to stay here.  
Outside it's cold.*

*MIMI  
I'd be near you!*

*RODOLFO  
And when we come back?*

*MIMI  
Who knows?*

*RODOLFO  
Give me your arm, my dear ...*

*MIMI  
Your servant, sir ...*

*RODOLFO  
Tell me you love me!*

*MIMI  
I love you.*

*RODOLFO and MIMI  
Beloved! My love! My love!*





## Holly Brown (Soprano)

Holly Brown was born in London and studied for her Bachelors and Masters degrees at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, achieving a distinction in both, as well as a diploma for exceptional performance. In 2020 she was contracted as a chorus member to Grange Park Opera for the cancelled season. She joined them again for their 2021 season. Previous stage and operatic experience includes Clorinda in *La Cenerentola* for British Youth Opera, Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* for the Oxford Alternative Orchestra, Carolina in *Il matrimonio segreto* for Hampstead Garden Opera, the cover of Miranda in *The Enchanted Island* for British Youth Opera, and Pamina in *The Magic Flute* at the Guildhall School. She has worked as a chorus soloist in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* for West Green House Festival Opera, and played Elaine in Gershwin's *Crazy for You*, alongside members of the Guildhall School's drama department. Other operatic chorus experiences include Judith Weir's *The Vanishing Bridegroom* for British Youth Opera and *The Monster in the Maze*, by Jonathan Dove at Barbican Centre with the LSO and Sir Simon Rattle.

Holly is generously supported in her studies at the Alexander Gibson Opera School by the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and is a Sybil Tutton Opera Award holder.



## Andrew Rawlings (Tenor)

Having recently completed his Masters at the Wales International Academy of Voice, Andrew is now at the beginning of his professional singing career. In summer 2021, Andrew joined Opera Loki singing Don José in their production of *Carmen* and will be returning to this role with Opera Brava in Summer 2022. Other roles include the title role in *Candide* (Bernstein), Sempronio (Haydn's *Lo Speciale*), Armed Guard (Mozart's *Magic Flute*), and Henry Crawford (Jonathon Dove's *Mansfield Park*).

Andrew has also sung as tenor soloist in numerous oratorios including Mozart's Coronation Mass (St Albans Cathedral), Verdi's Requiem (Arundel Cathedral) and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (Solihull). He has also featured as a concert soloist at venues such as St David's Hall (Cardiff) and De Montford Hall (Leicester).



## David Palmer (Piano)

David Palmer (b. 1997) is a London-based composer and pianist specialising in 20th- and 21st-century repertoire. David studies piano with Ronan O’Hora and Rolf Hind at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and composition with Richard Barrett. David is a 2022-23 Britten-Pears Young Artist.

David read music at the University of Oxford, graduating with a first-class BA in 2019. He ran the music and chamber music societies, and held multiple scholarships. Before Oxford, David was a composer for the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and attended the Junior Royal Northern College of Music. David teaches undergraduate modules at Lady Margaret Hall, Jesus College and Lincoln College of the University of Oxford.

Recent projects include Berg’s *Kammerkonzert*, a solo recital at a festival celebrating the 100th anniversary of TS Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, and various performances with his horn trio and other chamber ensembles.

# *Ariel*

**18:00-19:00, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

A new opera with music by Jonathan Dove and original settings by Jonny Danciger

*Ariel*, as Shakespeare’s most ethereal and musical character, has captivated composers throughout history from Henry Purcell to Thomas Adès.

Using some of the latest innovations in live sound technology, this presentation of *Ariel*’s songs and speeches explores how Shakespeare’s spirit can break beyond the corporal voice with the tools available to the contemporary composer.

Jonathan Dove’s *Songs of Ariel* are interspersed with original settings by Jonny Danciger, as music and soundscape is created live by solo soprano, a microphone and digital effects.



### **Jonny Danciger (Director, *Ariel*)**

Jonny Danciger is a stage director, composer and designer from South-West London, where he is currently the Artistic Director of the OSO Arts Centre. He read Music at St Peter's College, Oxford, specialising in electroacoustic composition, and trained in opera direction with the Royal Opera House (on Gounod's *Faust*) and British Youth Opera (*Scoring a Century*) assisting Keith Warner. Direction credits include Cumbria Opera's *Trouble in Tahiti/A Hand of Bridge*, large-scale productions of *Don Giovanni*, *Candide*, *Van Gogh* and *Der Diktator*, and world-premieres of operas by Toby Young and Joel Baldwin. Jonny's music for stage has been performed in London, Oxford, Birmingham, Edinburgh & Madrid, and his film composition work includes an advert for charity *Mind*. Jonny has acted professionally under directors Polly Findlay (*Twisted Tales*, *Lyric Hammersmith*) and Steven Daldry (*Billy Elliot*, *Victoria Palace Theatre*).



### **Helsa Townsend (*Ariel*)**

Helsa Townsend is a soprano from Cumbria who graduated from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2021 with a First Class degree. At the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Helsa performed the role of Prospero in *The Enchanted Island* and the eponymous role in *Coraline*. Helsa also enjoys song repertoire, having been awarded the Gordon Clinton English Song Prize for Singers, and was a finalist in the Edward Brooks Lieder Prize, the Conservatoire's Singing Prize and closer to home, the Keldwyth Award. Recently Helsa performed in a series of concerts with the orchestra and company of the Birmingham Royal Ballet, and is delighted to begin work soon on a new piece by Michael Wolters featuring the words of John Amaechi to be performed as part of the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Helsa enjoys music making of all kinds, from choral to solo, from early music to the most contemporary, from classical to jazz and pop, and is thrilled to be joining the team at Cumbria Opera Group once more.



# **We hope you have enjoyed the Cumbria Opera Group's Outdoor Opera Weekend 2022.**

Future engagements for the Cumbria Opera Group include:

*10<sup>th</sup> December 2022 - Handel's Messiah at St Andrew's Church, Penrith*

*16<sup>th</sup> April 2023 - Bach's St John Passion (staged) at Victoria Hall, Grange-over-Sands*

*3<sup>rd</sup> June 2023 - Cumbria Opera Festival 2023 Launch Night at Penrith Methodist Church*

*26<sup>th</sup> August - 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 - Cumbria Opera Festival 2023*

For more information about these events please visit [www.cumbriaoperagroup.com](http://www.cumbriaoperagroup.com)

You can support us in our mission to bring opera to Cumbria by **becoming a Friend** of the Cumbria Opera Festival 2023. We are excited to introduce three new Friends' Circles for the 2023 Festival, each of which will give Friends exclusive benefits.

**The Derwentwater Circle** (donations of £50 or more)

**The Ullswater Circle** (donations of £100 or more)

**The Windermere Circle** (donations of £200 or more)

For more information about becoming a Friend please contact Lucy at: [cumbriaoperagroup@gmail.com](mailto:cumbriaoperagroup@gmail.com).

The Cumbria Opera Group's Outdoor  
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