



Wigmore Hall Learning presents *Reimagining King Arthur*

A community chamber opera inspired by Henry Purcell's celebrated opera *King Arthur*

On Thursday 16 July 2015, Wigmore Hall will host the culmination of a 6-month creative project with **Early Opera Company** and Wigmore Hall Learning's resident ensemble **Ignite**, performing alongside a **140-strong community cast** from across Westminster. Henry Purcell's *King Arthur* story is reimagined by composer **Alasdair Nicolson** and director/librettist **Hazel Gould** in collaboration with the participants.

Reimagining King Arthur involves the characters of Arthur and Emmeline, portrayed by Early Opera Company's **George Humphrey** and **Mhairi Lawson**; Philadel, Oswald, Merlin and a complement of mischievous Forest Sprites, in an epic tale of battle, love and magic.

Hazel Gould said 'Having created this piece with children and adults from all over Westminster, it's magical to see how Wigmore Hall's unique space comes alive with the voices of so many members of this diverse community'.

The project brings together groups of all ages from across Westminster: St. Edwards Catholic Primary School, Edward Wilson Primary School, St. Marylebone School, Marylebone Boys' School and All Sing! Harrow Road Community Choir.

The journey began with school and community groups visiting Wigmore Hall to watch **Early Opera Company** perform either Purcell's original *King Arthur*, or our adaptation created especially for schools and families. Hazel Gould and Alasdair Nicolson then visited their settings to gather creative ideas, which took inspiration from the original opera. Following these visits Alasdair and Hazel created the opera score, with the new material woven together with excerpts from Purcell's *King Arthur* and additional improvised material from **Ignite**. The groups are now rehearsing with Musical Director **Isabelle Adams** in the lead up to the performance.

'We wanted to create something which brought people together with a shared feeling of purpose and achievement', said Cath Sewell, Head of Learning at Wigmore Hall. 'We are delighted to working with such a strong creative team, and to bring an opera written 400 years ago together with new music inspired by the participants themselves creates a real sense of connection and ownership.'

Reimagining King Arthur is the third project in a three-year **Westminster Community Chamber Programme**, funded by **The City Bridge Trust, Mayfield Valley Arts Trust, The Monument Trust, The Loveday Charitable Trust, John Lyon's Charity** and **The Harold Hyam Wingate Foundation**. Both *Reimagining King Arthur* and the wider three-year programme bring together Wigmore Hall's reputation for world-class performance and commitment to new writing, and our highly regarded work with schools, community groups and older people.

Performance: Thursday 16 July 2014 – 6.30pm (one hour in duration with no interval)

www.wigmore-hall.org.uk/whats-on/a-community-chamber-opera-201507161830

Notes to Editors:

For further information please contact Cath Sewell at Wigmore Hall Learning

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Photos available on request