

A painting of a mountain range with a rainbow over a lake. The mountains are rendered in shades of blue, green, and brown, with a prominent peak in the center. A rainbow arches across the middle ground. The foreground shows a dark blue lake with some white foam or waves. The sky is filled with dark, dramatic clouds.

Elgan Llŷr Thomas

tenor

Edmund Whitehead

piano

St Thomas' Church Winchelsea
Sunday 1st September 2024
Winchelsea Arts

ELGAN LLŶR THOMAS

Elgan Llŷr Thomas is a former English National Opera Harewood Artist and Scottish Opera Emerging Artist. Engagements have included First Noble of Brabant *Lohengrin* (Royal Opera, London), Dr Richardson *Breaking the Waves* (Opéra Comique), Don José *La Tragédie de Carmen* (Buxton International Festival), Lysander *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Nemorino *L'elisir d'amore* and Rinuccio *Gianni Schicchi* (Scottish Opera), Peter Quint *The Turn of the Screw* and Ralph Rackstraw *HMS Pinafore* (English National Opera), Gérald *Lakmé* (Chelsea Opera Group), Prunier *La rondine* (Opera North), Almaviva *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Opéra national de Bordeaux, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées), Tom Rakewell *The Rake's Progress* (Swedish Chamber Orchestra), Duke of Mantua *Rigoletto* (Opera Holland Park) and both Cassio *Otello* and Steuermann *Der fliegende Holländer* (Grange Park Opera).

His recordings include Elgar's *Caractacus* on Hyperion and his debut solo recital album *Unveiled* on Delphian CD. Current engagements include his North American debut singing Beethoven *Symphony No. 9* with Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood, a work he will also sing with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at London's Barbican Hall, *Bwystfilod Aflan - Unclean Beasts*, a brand new National Eisteddfod Commission, for Music Theatre Wales, Daniel Kildane's *Cradle Song* and *Pulsing* with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group at the Wigmore Hall and a return to The Royal Opera as François in the new production of Bernstein's *A Quiet Place*.

elganthomastenor.com

EDMUND WHITEHEAD

British-Russian conductor and pianist Edmund Whitehead first achieved international recognition as a Jette Parker Young Artist Conductor and Répétiteur at the Royal Opera House. There he assisted and was mentored by Sir Antonio Pappano. He conducted new productions of Henze's *Phaedra*, excerpts from *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and Richard Jones' critically-acclaimed new staging of H K Grüber's *Frankenstein!!* starring Allan Clayton.



At the Royal Opera, Edmund worked as music staff on *La traviata*, *Hänsel und Gretel*, *La forza del destino*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Simon Boccaengra*, *Otello*, *Werther*, *Death in Venice*, *Fidelio*, *Jenůfa*, *Kát'a Kabanová*, *Tosca*, *Lohengrin*, *Aida*, and *Salome*. He joined the permanent Music Staff of the Welsh National Opera in 2023, making his company debut conducting *Blaze of Glory*, and in the 2023/24 season conducted *Play Opera Live*, *Death in Venice*, and the *Opera Favourites* Gala. In the current season he will conduct *Suor Angelica* and *Gianni Schicchi*, and a series of *Schools' Concerts*.

Other opera companies Edmund has worked with include the Opéra National de Lorraine, New Chamber Opera, Tete-a-tete Festival, Grange Park Opera, Grimeborn Festival, English Pocket Opera, Opera Studio Oxford, Opera Settecento, Budapest Opera Festival, and British Youth Opera. He has also conducted the Moscow Camerata, Wimbledon Symphony Orchestra, and Cambridge Philharmonic and held full-time conducting positions with the Central London Orchestra, Oxford University Sinfonietta, and the Arcadian Singers.

edmundwhitehead.com

GIOACHINO ROSSINI 1792 - 1868

La Promessa (from *Soirées Musicales*, 1835)

Rossini held weekly soirées in his Paris home for which he wrote a set of songs published in 1835. The lyrics were borrowed from Pietro Metastasio (1698-1782) for the opening song or canzonetta, *La Promessa*, a song in which the lover swears eternal love and loyalty to his beloved.

GERALD FINZI 1901 - 1956

Finzi is often regarded as a very English composer. The deaths of his father, three brothers and his teacher perhaps lie behind the themes of fragility and transient existence, explored in many of his works. Finzi preferred to release his songs as collections rather than individually. This set, published posthumously, shows his empathy with the poetry of Thomas Hardy.

Till Earth Outwears (1958)

a setting of poems by Thomas Hardy (1840 - 1928)

1. *Let me enjoy the Earth*
2. *In years defaced and lost*
3. *The Market Girl*
4. *I look into my glass*
5. *It never looks like summer*
6. *At a lunar eclipse*
7. *Life laughs onward*

GAETANO DONIZETTI 1797 - 1848

Il Baraiolo (The Boatman)

Donizetti was a prolific opera composer and his finest works remain in the repertoire. He also wrote over 200 songs. This song begins, *Row, row, the wind has died, the water is pure, the sky is bright.*

FRANZ SCHUBERT 1797 - 1828

Nacht und Träume (Night and Dreams, 1825)

Schubert's musical output in his short life was remarkable, not least his lieder. This song begins, *Holy night, you sink down, dreams too, you sink down.*

MEIRION WILLIAMS 1901 - 1976

Pan Ddaw'r Nos (When the Night Comes, 1951)

Born in Dyffryn Ardudwy, Williams studied at the Royal Academy of Music. He received BBC commissions and his songs remain highly regarded. This song was composed while Williams was mourning the death of his mother.

GIACOMO PUCCINI 1858 - 1924

Morire (To die, 1917)

The lyrics are by Guiseppe Adami (1878 - 1946), Puccini's collaborator on *La Rondine* and *Turandot*. The opening words are, *Death?.. But who knows what life is.*

ROGER QUILTER 1877 - 1953

Quilter was born in Hove, East Sussex to a wealthy landowning family. His musical studies after schooling at Eton included a period at Frankfurt. Known today mainly for his many finely crafted songs and song settings, he also wrote orchestral music.

Drink to me only with thine eyes Ben Jonson, *To Celia*, 1616
Drink to me only with thine eyes and I will pledge with mine...

Now sleeps the crimson petal
from *The Princess*, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1847
Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ...

FRANZ SCHUBERT 1797 - 1828

Du bist die Ruh Friedrich Ruckert (1788 - 1866)
(You are repose and gentle peace...)

INTERVAL

COLE PORTER 1891 - 1964

Anything Goes (1934)

Porter's witty musical for which P G Wodehouse helped write the book has become a frequently revived classic, with standards such as *I get a kick out of you* and *You're the Top*.

*Times have changed, and we've often rewound the clock
Since the Puritans got a shock, when they landed on Plymouth Rock
If today, any shock they should try to stem,
'Stead of landing on Plymouth Rock
Plymouth Rock would land on them.*

ELGAN LLŶR THOMAS b.1990

Our singer this evening is also a composer. *Swan* is a song cycle, with words by Andrew Macmillan (b.1988). The cycle draws inspiration from the Tchaikovsky ballet *Swan Lake*, in particular Sir Matthew Bourne's radical production with male swans.

1. *The lake is calm tonight*
2. *My first time in water*
3. *Then the year everything was swan*
4. *The black swan of debt*
5. *Then the year everything was darkness*
6. *Sing a swan of sixpence*
7. *Mother don't eat me*
8. *I plucked each feather from myself*

W S GWYNN WILLIAMS 1896 - 1978

My little Welsh home (1950)

Gwynn Williams is regarded as an influential Welsh composer and teacher. This song was written in memory of his mother, paralleling *Pan Dwar'r Nos* sung earlier.

*I am dreaming of the mountains of my home
Of the mountains where in childhood I would roam*

RICHARD SAMUEL HUGHES 1855 - 1893

Hughes was a prominent Welsh composer and pianist during his brief lifetime.

Elen Fwyn lyrics by Daffyd Ddu o Hrradug (died 1371)
(Sweet Ellen)

STEPHEN SONDHEIM 1930 - 2021

Being Alive from *Company* (1970)

Sondheim's apprenticeship with Oscar Hammerstein and subsequent collaboration with Leonard Bernstein on *West Side Story* were the beginning of an astonishing career in musical theatre, only recently ended. Sondheim's bitter-sweet personal style is plain in *Being Alive*.

*Someone to hold you too close
Someone to hurt you too deep
Someone to sit in your chair
To ruin your sleep*

notes by R J Manuell

cover picture - detail from Arenig Fawr by James Dickson Innes (1887-1914)

David Page 2024

Next at Winchelsea Arts:

Saturday 12th October at 7.30pm **Pascal Rogé piano**
Satie, Ravel, Debussy and Poulenc



Pascal Rogé is an exceptional French pianist. His playing of repertoire by major French composers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is characterized by its elegance, beauty and stylistically perfect phrasing. He has performed in almost every major concert hall in the world, with every major orchestra across the globe and has collaborated with the most distinguished conductors in history, including Lorin Maazel, Michael Tilson Thomas and Mariss Jansons.

winchelsea-arts.org.uk

Light and Sound at St Thomas's Church

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lighting and sound system in the Church.*

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