

# Stars shine day and night at Proms 2014



Leslie Garrett

Stars will be shining both day and night at this year's Proms at St Jude's Music and Literary Festival.

The sparkle starts on the opening night, Saturday 21 June, with a concert performance of Puccini's *La Bohème*, by Nevill Holt Opera. The company casts the best young British talent, so you'll see plenty of rising stars.

The brilliance continues through to Last Night of the Proms when Lesley Garrett will be appearing with The London International Orchestra. With a voice described as 'ample and rich', Garrett has won critical acclaim for her international opera performances, stage appearances and solo CDs.

### MEMORABLE

Also sure to be memorable is a performance of Handel's rarely-heard *Esther*, by the Elia Ensemble, performed on period instruments. This will be introduced by their patron and Suburb resident, Professor Lord Robert Winston.

For aficionados of voice, Maria Friedman and her long-time piano accompanist, Jason Carr, will explore the genius of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim.

### ECCLECTIC

With an eclectic program of concerts, there is sure to be something to suit your taste at Proms this year.

Without question one of the finest string quartets in England, the Endellion String Quartet will appear with soloist Michael Collins, to perform Mozart's *Clarinet Quintet*.

Another evening will see a recital by young Welsh pianist Llŷr Williams. Widely admired for his musical intelligence and his expressive and communicative interpretations, Williams has worked with orchestras around the world.

Among the other treats in store are Tasmin Little on violin, accompanied by Piers Lane on piano, as well as The Barbican Piano Trio and Friends.

Those who like trad jazz will be delighted by Keith Ball and his Jazzmen.

### ICONIC

Now in its third successful year, LitFest will be taking place over the first weekend of the Festival, 21-22 June at The Henrietta Barnett School.

This opens with actress and author Phyllida Law, talking with TV producer Piers Plowright about her humane and often defiantly hilarious account of her mother's final months in the grip of dementia.

Other luminaries at LitFest include financial and political journalist Hugh Pym, whose latest book, *Inside the Banking Crisis*, is published in April, and journalist Lynn Barber, whose memoir, *An Education*, was made into a film. Her latest book, to be published in May, will reveal more secrets of those in the limelight.

Iconic author Edna O'Brien will be discussing *Country Girl* – a memoir, which tells of her journey from the west of Ireland to London in the Swinging Sixties and beyond. Her debut novel, *The Country Girls*, published in 1960, was initially banned in Ireland due to its frankness, and O'Brien was driven into exile. She has since written over 20 works of fiction and biography and is credited with shaping the course of modern Irish literature.

### EYE-OPENING

An eye-opening series of eight Proms Heritage Walks starts on Sunday 22 June, when HGS Trust Architectural Adviser David Davidson leads a walk exploring how the master plan for Hampstead Garden Suburb influenced modern town planning. Other walks throughout the week look at the sharing of communal spaces, hidden architectural treasures in the City of London, and 'Controversial Trees'.

An innovation this year is a walk aimed at families with children aged from six to 14 (no charge for kids), entitled 'What Do Houses Do For Us?' which looks at the features of houses that keep us dry and warm.

As in previous years, Proms offers free lunchtime concerts,

including several for families. There will be a café open throughout the Festival as well as a special LitFest café.

### WORTHWHILE

Funds raised by Proms will go to support the Aspire programme for socially excluded young people at Toynbee Hall, and the North London Hospice, caring for people with life limiting illnesses in Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. Proms donated £50,000 to these causes in 2013.

The launch of this year's Festival took place at Henrietta Barnett School on 9 March, with Grace Durham, mezzo-soprano, accompanied by Juliane Gallant, in an evening of Parisian song.

The Festival runs from Saturday 21 June to Sunday 29 June 2014 in Central Square. Booking is now open at [www.promsatstjudes.org.uk](http://www.promsatstjudes.org.uk) and by phone from Monday 2 June, on 020 3322 8123. Individuals or organisations who would like to

sponsor Proms or advertise in the programme should email: [susie.gregson@promsatstjudes.org.uk](mailto:susie.gregson@promsatstjudes.org.uk).

LYNN MICHAELSON



Llŷr Williams



## St John Passion

It was an ambitious project to perform Bach's *St John Passion* at the Free Church. As one arrived for the performance, Jonathan Gregory was rehearsing the audience for the five chorales where they would join the choir and the orchestra seemed very small with one player for each string part. One was prepared for a low key performance.

However from the first full chorus *Hail! Lord and Master* with its dissonances evoking grief, it was clear that an exciting evening was ahead. The chorus made up of both the Free Church and St Judes choirs and friends augmented by the UK-Japan choir sang their hearts out and it was an inspired idea to draw the audience into this intimate work by encouraging them to join in five of the chorales.

The soloists were excellent led by a quite outstanding Evangelist Gwilym Bowen. In addition to the sheer beauty of the music, he brought both pathos and passion

to his singing of a very demanding part – an electrifying performance. The Bass (Pilates) was also outstanding with a mellifluous tone and mention should also be made of an splendid last minute replacement Jesus.

Despite the small numbers, the orchestral sound filled the Church and was in excellent balance with the singing. Bach had originally scored the *Passion* with 15/17 musicians and the forces in the Church achieved an intimate ensemble. There were a number of beautiful woodwind solos but the achingly moving cello accompaniment to the Alto aria *It is fulfilled* was quite exceptional.

Jonathan Gregory must be congratulated for proposing and directing this ambitious project and achieving such a triumph and Ian Tutton and his team must also be commended for supporting him despite all the potential difficulties. Well Done!

PETER FALK

## St Jude's support for choral scholars

St Jude's has a long-standing music tradition with organ scholars who have trained at St Jude's successfully achieving organ scholarships at eminent universities and many former choristers have become choral scholars and/or professional

singers. We are delighted to announce a new St Jude's choral scholarship programme, open to those age 16-20.

If you would like to know more, please contact Director of Music, Nicholas Chalmers at [nicchalmers@hotmail.com](mailto:nicchalmers@hotmail.com).

## Autumn Wordsearch winner

In the last word search readers were asked to find golfing terms. Congratulations to the winner Adrian Brodtkin from Kingsley

Way. He and his wife, they both practise as solicitors, have lived on the Suburb since 1975. He tells me he is not a regular golfer.

## WORDSEARCH

In the box below are concealed 15 Suburb street names of FOUR or more letters; and an extra one highlighted to start you off (don't include it in your total!) Names may be read in all directions, straight or diagonally. Entries should be listed on paper or a postcard and sent to Diana Woodfield, 5 Erskine Hill, NW11 6HA with your name, address and phone number. The closing date is June 20. All correct entries go into a draw to win a £20 voucher from Joseph's Bookstore.

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