

Glorious Proms at St Jude's Festival 2015



Maureen Lipman

This year's eagerly awaited Proms at St Jude's includes the world's favourite opera, one of Beethoven's best-loved violin sonatas and a musical celebration of Alice in Wonderland narrated by West End star Maureen Lipman.

But the festival will open on June 20 with a special tribute to Kay Hurwitz, founder of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Youth Music Centre, who died last year at 94.

The lunchtime family concert of choral, orchestral and chamber music features senior students and ex-members of the centre which opened in Bigwood House in 1967. Artistic director Nigel Goldberg will direct them in works by Strauss, Grieg and Mozart.

Former Muswell Hill resident Maureen Lipman, now exiled to far-away Paddington, is looking forward to returning to the Suburb to narrate the London première of *Wonderland*, a musical tribute to Alice in Wonderland creator Lewis Carroll.

Among other highlights are Nevill Holt Opera whose sell-out *La Bohème* wowed first-night audiences in 2014. They are back this year with a concert performance of Bizet's *Carmen* conducted by St Jude's director of music Nicholas Chalmers.

Violin virtuoso Charlie Siem returns with a programme including Beethoven's *Kreutzer* Sonata, the Brodsky String Quartet perform Schubert's *Quintet in C major* with cellist Gemma Rosefield and vocal ensemble The Cardinal's Musick sing works by Palestrina, Allegri and John Tavener.

Swing lovers can look forward to Clare Teal and her Mini Big Band as they recreate songs from the great female jazz singers of the 20th century.

YOUNG TALENT

There will plenty of 21st-century talent on show, too. The Melos Sinfonia, which draws students and new graduates from UK and European conservatories and universities, performs Poulenc's *Concerto for Two Pianos* and Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*. They are directed by former Highgate School pupil Oliver Zeffman who recently conducted the Russian premières of several major British works.

And Kammerphilharmonie Europa, young musicians from 19 European countries, will continue the instrumental evenings with Sergey Schepkin on piano. The New York Times calls him 'arresting and formidable'.

As ever, the festival ends with a Last Night of the Proms. Concert-goers can be sure of plenty of bunting, flag-waving and traditional favourites galore as the London International Orchestra and mezzo Victoria Simmonds bring proceedings to a rousing finish.

The festival runs from Saturday June 20 to Sunday June 28 in and around Central Square, with most concerts held in St Jude's church. Running alongside it are the popular Lit Fest and the guided Heritage walks.

Proms spokesman Ron Finlay said "Whatever your tastes – music, literature or simply getting out and about – this year's festival is sure to have something you'll enjoy. And you'll be helping good causes too. Last year we raised an amazing £60,000."

Three pounds in four of proceeds raised go to Toynbee Hall's *Make It* project to help socially excluded young people and the fourth pound supports North London Hospice.

WONDERLAND

Maureen Lipman, who returns to the Suburb to narrate Lewis Carroll musical tribute *Wonderland*, said: "I relish every opportunity to revisit North London after eight years in Paddington looking for a small bear in a duffel coat. The suburb is home to my first walk with my dog, my Sunday bage-l-and-chopped-liver expeditions and my visits bearing a special stone to the beautiful grave of my husband Jack Rosenthal.

"I have never *not* been ever-so-slightly lost driving through it but during the blossom season it is the prettiest place on earth outside Japan. The idea of the HGS Proms is very seductive and I can't wait to be part of it."

Wonderland was scripted by *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* author Louis de Bernières to mark the 150th anniversary of Carroll's masterpiece. Proms organisers are delighted to be hosting its London première in St Jude's on Sunday June 21. The work, with

contributions from 12 composers whose style ranges from chamber music to film scores and rock, is suitable for adults and children over eight and starts at 7pm.

THE BOOKS

The LitFest on the weekend June 20 and 21 in Henrietta Barnett School has something for everyone in a dazzling line-up.

Former Moscow investment banker Bill Browder, who has a home in Hampstead, will discuss his sensational new book *Red Notice: How I Became Putin's No 1 Enemy*. In it he claims President Vladimir Putin runs Russia like a crime syndicate... and he should know. Corrupt officials seized Bill's assets and stole \$230 million. His lawyer was beaten to death in jail. And now sinister text messages warn he might be next. He will be in conversation with former UK ambassador to Moscow and Proms Patron, Sir Rodric Braithwaite.

Suburb author Michael Ridpath, who gave up a career as a city bond trader to write a string of financial thrillers, will be talking about his move into the crime and espionage genre. *Sea of Stone*, again featuring Icelandic detective Magnus Jonson, is the fourth in his *Fire and Ice* series. A sequel to *Traitor's Gate*, set in Berlin in 1939, is to be published in the summer. Michael will be in conversation with ex-lawyer-turned-crime-writer William Ryan.

Stanley Johnson, father of London Mayor Boris, will be talking about his latest volume of memoirs *Stanley I Presume*. His life has roamed many avenues from his pioneering work saving rainforests to serving on the staff of the World Bank and the European Commission.

One-time Labour Cabinet Minister and now best-selling author Alan Johnson will discuss his second volume of memoirs, *Please Mr Postman*, with Gordon Brown's former spokesperson Simon Lewis.

Other must-see guests include former journalist Gill Hornby, BBC maths wizard Alex Bellos,



Charlie Siem



Clare Teal

award-winning political journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown and Vita Sackville-West's granddaughter Vanessa Nicolson.

THE WALKS

Daily guided walks around the Suburb and beyond take place alongside the festival. In one, Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust manager Nick Packard will look at the work of the Trust and how it cares for our area.

Other walks will highlight different aspects of the Suburb past and present. The history of the artisan quarter during the blitz will be examined by

Marjorie Galbinski. And a tour of Golders Hill Park and Hampstead Heath Extension led by Heath superintendent Bob Warnock will tell how Suburb founder Dame Henrietta Barnett helped save them from developers.

TICKETS

Go online at promsatstjudes.org.uk or phone 020 3322 8123. Lunchtime concerts are free and tickets are not required. Most musical performances are in St Jude's Church. LitFest events take place in The Henrietta Barnett School.

ROBIN PORTER



Susie Steyn, Mike Freer MP and Niamh O'Donnell-Keenan at the Proms' launch

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