

NEIL JENKINS

CAREER

Neil Jenkins has carved out a unique career, being equally at home as an Operatic, Oratorio and Recital singer; and combining this with an increasingly important role as a musicologist. In 2002 he was appointed to a Cambridge Fellowship to enable him to research the lives of 18th century English singers. Neil has translated and edited all of Bach's major choral works for the *New Novello Choral Edition*. The Bach Choir of London and English National Opera are amongst those organisations which regularly use his editions.

In the world of opera he has appeared regularly with all of Britain's leading companies. At Glyndebourne he has sung in *Owen Wingrave*, *The Makropulos Case*, *The Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Lulu*, *L'Heure Espagnol*, *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Where the Wild Things are*, and *Higglety Pigglety Pop..* At the 1976 Aldeburgh Festival he created the role of *Inkslinger* in Britten's *Paul Bunyan*, under the supervision of the composer himself. He recently appeared with New Kent Opera in Britten's *Albert Herring*, having sung with the previous Kent Opera throughout its twenty years existence. He also recently visited the Aldeburgh Festival with the ENO for the first ever Aldeburgh staging of Britten's *Peter Grimes*.

He has recorded under such eminent batons as those of Bernstein, Britten, Marriner, Mackerras, Chailly, Nagano, Davis, Haitink, Norrington, Eliot Gardiner and Hickox. He is also known for his performances of contemporary music, where he has been directed by Simon Rattle, Hans Werner Henze, Sakari Oramo, David Atherton, Krzysztof Penderecki, Witold Lutoslawski, and Boulez.

Since the year 2000 Neil has recently sung in Janacek's *The Makropulos Case* in New York, Berlin, Lyon and Amsterdam; Britten's *Billy Budd* in Geneva and Chicago; and *Peter Grimes* in Paris, Santiago and Israel. He also performed the Britten *Serenade* four times with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra (and recorded it with the Berlin Oriel Ensemble), and recently took part in Andre Previn's *A Streetcar named Desire* with the composer conducting the LSO. In 2005 he toured Ireland as *Arnalta* in the OTC's new production of Monteverdi's *The Coronation of Poppea*, which was subsequently seen at the Buxton Festival and at Snape Maltings. In the autumn of 2007 he returned to WNO as *Irus* in Monteverdi's *Il Ritorno di Ulisse*, having made a spectacularly successful appearance as *Arnalta* in their *The Coronation of Poppea*, which was subsequently shown on Channel 4 TV. In the spring of 2008 he had a great success playing *Bardolph* opposite Bryn Terfel's *Falstaff* for WNO in Cardiff and on tour. This was broadcast on Radio 3, and recorded for TV and possible later release on DVD.

Other operas which he has performed on TV include Verdi's *Falstaff* (with Sir Geraint Evans in the title role, and this time as *Fenton*), Tippett's *King Priam* (conducted by Sir Roger Norrington, recently re-released on the *Arthaus* label), and the Glyndebourne productions of Knussen's *Higglety Pigglety Pop*, and Berg's *Lulu* conducted by Sir Andrew Davis.

Two solo recordings by Neil Jenkins have recently been re-released by the *Lyrta* label: Gerald Finzi's song-cycle "A Young Man's Exhortation", and a collection of Renaissance and Baroque arias called "250 years of English Song"

PEDAGOGY

Neil was a Professor of Singing at the Royal College of Music in the 1970s, until his flourishing operatic career prevented him from committing fully to his regular teaching duties. However, he has remained in close contact with the RCM Singing Department, and is often invited to examine, adjudicate, and assess the young singers at the college, in their Grading Exams as well as in their operatic performances. Neil also works extensively as an adjudicator for the British Federation of Competitive Music Festivals.

For the past 25 years Neil has taught at several international summer schools, including Dartington International Summer School, Summer Music Summer School, and Hereford and Canford Summer Schools. He gives a regular weekend course on Oratorio Arias every year at Jackdaws in Somerset, as well as regular masterclasses throughout the country; and has sat on various international singing juries, such as the Richard Lewis Award, the Great Elm Vocal Awards & The Prince's Prize.

CONDUCTING ACTIVITIES

Since September 2002 Neil has been the Musical Director of the *Sussex Chorus*, having conducted the Brighton Chamber Choir for the previous seven years. The Sussex Chorus's 2005 concert in the Brighton Festival – Neil's own dramatic staging of his English edition of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* - won the award for 'Best Classical Music Event'. He conducts them in 6 concerts per season, and has taken them on tour to Estonia, Cyprus and Bruges. Under Neil's direction, between 1994 and 2001, the *Brighton Chamber Choir* made three CD recordings, and appeared 'live' on Classic FM. A further choir that Neil directs is the 20-strong *Neil Jenkins Chorale*, which performs locally in Sussex, has toured the cathedrals of Normandy, appeared on BBC TV in the series "On the straight and narrow", and has made 4 records of choral favourites and Christmas Carols for Kevin Mayhew Ltd. This group also performs in concerts promoted by the Raymond Gubbay Organisation, and has been heard on the sound-track to the classical music video "Eternal Light" starring Renata Jonscher and Neil Jenkins.

HONOURS

Neil Jenkins is an MA Honours Graduate of Cambridge University, where he was a Choral Scholar in the Kings College Choir, under the direction of Sir David Willcocks, from 1963 - 1966. In 2001 he was appointed the Helen Cam Visiting Fellow Commoner at Girton College Cambridge.

In 1998 he held the post of Warden of the *Incorporated Society of Musicians*, and in 2004 was honoured by the *Worshipful Company of Musicians* with the presentation of the "Sir Charles Santley Memorial Award" for his achievements both in his singing career, as well as in his ten-year labour of producing new scholarly Bach editions for the Novello Choral Series.

Neil is President of the *Haywards Heath Music Club*, the *Shoreham Oratorio Choir*, *Basildon Choral Society* and the *Grange Choral Society of Bournemouth*; and Vice-President of the *Brighton Competitive Music Festival* and the *Huntingdon Philharmonic Society*. He has recently been appointed Patron of the *Goldsmith's Choral Union* of London.

Neil is now the Artistic Director of *Ardingly International Music School* (AIMS) which hosts a one-week residential summer school for singers at Ardingly College Sussex in August, a non-residential one week Mini-AIMS at Ardingly in the week after Easter, as well as one-day masterclasses around the country. In 2008 these included Exeter; and venues for 2009 will include Bath and Glasgow.

RESEARCH

Neil has recently produced a major study on the origins of the librettos for Haydn's two great oratorios *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, which has been published by the Haydn Society of Great Britain.. *King's Music* now publishes his new English performing editions of these works..

As a result of his Cambridge Fellowship at Girton College he has written a biography of the English tenor *John Beard*, who worked for Handel and Garrick in a highly successful career. He presented his findings in a paper to the 2005 "Handel Symposium". The book is in its final stages, and will be published soon. One section of it has already been published in the *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, Band XII. The whole book can be consulted on Neil's website at www.neiljenkins.info

In May 2006 he presented some more new findings – including some material from the RCM manuscript collection – to the RCM’s *Music and Ideas* series of talks. In January 2008 he presented a paper at the “John Rich Symposium”, and masterminded a theatrical tribute to this eminent man of the 18th century London theatre, in which he recreated a famous scene from *The Beggar’s Opera*.

His research has now been taken up by other scholars, who acknowledge a debt to his original research. He is quoted in recent scholarly works by the Handel experts Donald Burrows and Hans Joachim Marx. His work on Haydn’s oratorio *The Creation* is acknowledged in the forthcoming Ur-Text edition, and by Paul McCreesh in his new recording of the work for *Archiv Produktion*..

MUSIC EDITIONS

As well as his Haydn editions for *King’s Music*, and Bach editions for *Novello*, which include scholarly editions, with new English texts, of the *St Matthew Passion*, *St John Passion*, *Christmas Oratorio*, *Easter Oratorio*, *Ascension Oratorio* and *Magnificat* (in D and in E flat), Neil has produced a performing edition of Schutz’s *The Christmas Story* for Novello, and song albums for Kevin Mayhew Ltd (*O Holy Night*, *O Praise God*, *The Carol Singer’s Handbook*), and Oxford University Press (*Sing Solo Sacred*, *Favourite Songs of Ivor Gurney*).

His Bach editions have rapidly become the standard way of performing these works in English. The Bach Choir of London took the lead by taking up his edition of the *St Matthew Passion* for their annual Festival Hall performances; and English National Opera have twice staged his edition of the *St John Passion* as well as televising it.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information, please consult Neil’s websites:

www.neiljenkins.com - for further details of his career, recordings, and photo gallery

www.neiljenkins.info - for copies of many of his Prefaces, Articles, Book and works of scholarship

www.ardinglyims.org - for details of the Singers’ Summer School that he runs with his wife Penny

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