

## **Gianni Schicchi – singers and staff from the European Opera Centre**



The Anglo-Irish baritone **Patrick Alexander Keefe** (the cobbler) is the 2022 winner of Glyndebourne's prestigious John Christie Award. He graduated last year from the Royal Academy of Music Opera School, having previously studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at Oxford. He continues to build on his Oxford degree, pursuing composition in his spare time.

**Emmanuel Franco** (the notary) comes originally from Mexico. Now resident in the Netherlands, Emmanuel received his first degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, progressing to the Dutch National Opera Academy. Subsequently a member of the opera studio in Strasbourg, Emmanuel's appearances have taken him to Germany, Italy, Spain as well as to Wexford.



**Dionysios Avgerinos** (the dyer) comes from Thessaloniki, Greece where he studied at the Music Conservatoire. He is now at the University of Music and the Performing Arts, Vienna. Although still only 21 years of age, he already has stage experience in Austria performing Papagano in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* among other roles.

Colombian baritone **Jacobo Ochoa** (the doctor) graduated from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with a first-class honours degree. Subsequently, he became a member of the Tenerife Opera Studio. He made his debut at Palma's Verdi Festival, where he is due to return for performances of *Rigoletto* and *La forza del destino*.



**Matteo Loi** (Betto) comes from Cagliari, Sardinia. He obtained his singing diploma at the Florence Conservatoire, having previously studied at the Fiesole School of Music. For a season, he was a member of the Accademia del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, subsequently performing in Austria, France, Germany and Switzerland in addition to his continuing work in Italy.

After graduating from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with first class honours, **Aimée Fisk** (Nella) studied at the Franz Liszt Academy, Budapest (where she was the Joseph Weingarten scholar) and at the Royal Academy of Music. She has twice been the recipient of the Jennifer Vyvyan scholarship. Aimée, who comes from Leeds, is also a keen jazz singer.





The British tenor **Robert Forrest** (Gherardo) graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, undertaking postgraduate studies at the Royal Academy and Royal College of Music, as well as at Girton College, Cambridge. An Alvarez Young Artist at Garsington, his operatic debut was with the Netherlands Reisopera. This summer he returns to Glyndebourne.

The Australian mezzo-soprano **Indyana Schneider** (Zita) studied at Magdalen College, Oxford, as well as in Hannover and Vienna. Already acclaimed by *Opera* magazine - "fabulous... the voice full of depth and character", this summer she has been engaged by Garsington and later this year will join the Zurich International Opera Studio.



Among many awards, the French soprano **Anaïs Constans** (Lauretta) won the European Opera Centre prize at the Viñas competition in Barcelona in 2018. Roles performed since include Micaëla (Bizet *Carmen*) at Opéra de Monte-Carlo; and most recently Susanna (Mozart *Le nozze di Figaro*) at Opéra national du Capitole de Toulouse.

**Matteo Roma** (Rinuccio) comes from Venice. Although still in his twenties, he has already established a strong reputation in Italy and beyond. Recent notable performances include Sir Edgardo di Ravenswood in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*. Matteo's future plans include appearances at the Rossini Festival, at Ravenna and in the Netherlands. This is his UK debut.



**Stefano Marchisio** (Marco) comes from Alba in Piedmont, where he began his musical studies, before pursuing these in Alessandria and at the Conservatorio "Niccolò Paganini" in Genoa. He recently sang at the Musikverein in Vienna, and pursues a career especially in Italian houses, with engagements in Bari, Genoa, Trieste and Verona, as well as at the Rossini and Puccini Festivals.

**Felipe Cudina-Begovic** (Simone) comes originally from Argentina. Much of his early musical education was at the Instituto Superior de Arte del Teatro Colón. After performing widely in Argentina, he is now a Croatian citizen, living in Split, where he has already pursued professional engagements, especially in the operas of Verdi.





**Céline Akçağ** (La Ciesca) comes from Zurich. Her studies in Freiburg included an exchange with the Royal Academy of Music in London. Postgraduate courses have been attended in Munich and Salzburg (the Mozarteum). Céline has been finalist in several competitions, winning the Karlsruhe Competition for song from the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. She has already undertaken a number of professional engagements in Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

**Bernard Rozet** (stage director) has had a lifelong interest in comedy. He writes: *'When I began my studies to become an actor (at the National Conservatoire in Lyon) comedy was not in fashion in France. Tragedy ruled and I often found myself cast in leading tragic roles. There were many Romeos. But I never lost my interest in the comic and in the fantastic. And I never lost my wish to direct as well as to act.'* After 12 years as a successful actor working in theatre and television, he founded his own theatre company *L'équipe Rozet*. From its base in Lyon, the company has held residencies at theatres across France. His directorial debut *Revue ménage* has been performed more than 100 times in France. While still working as an actor, he was introduced to opera and developed a passion for lyric theatre, naturally especially where comedy and music meet. He believes that singers can work in the same way as actors, creating a company with a company spirit for a particular project. Family connections with and regular visits to Sardinia allow him to feel at home in repertoire in Italian.



**Juliette Sabbah** (repetiteur), who joined Irène Kudela in preparing the production musically, comes originally from Strasbourg. She trained in Paris and at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where she studied with James Baillieu and Malcolm Martineau. She pursues a career in opera, song and chamber music and her recently released her first recording *Paris Vagabond*.

**Irène Kudela** (Head of Music Staff) prepared the production musically. She is one of the most sought-after opera coaches and is fluent in seven languages. Born in Yugoslavia, with French, Russian and Czech origins, she began her musical studies in Prague. A graduate of the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, she subsequently taught there for more than a decade. She acted as Rostropovich's assistant for several years, and has been associated with many other celebrated conductors including Pierre Boulez, Charles Mackerras, Jiří Bělohlávek and Gennady Rozhdestvensky. She was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres, among a number of other honours and prizes.

