

Wednesday 26 April, 6pm to 7pm

Alexander Armstrong introduces

STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

by

Thomas Guthrie, Vicky Olusanya & the Lewisham Creative Chorus
with songs from Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin*

Venue: [World Heart Beat](#)

Embassy Gardens, Nine Elms, Vauxhall SW11 7BD

Cast

Alexander Armstrong compere

Gwyneth Herbert singer

Thomas Guthrie singer, composer/arranger, director

Vicky Olusanya lyricist, associate director

Maria da Luz Ghoumrassi choreographer, puppeteer

Vox Urbane professional diverse choir

The Mind and Soul Choir (Maudsley Hospital) community choir

The Outcry Ensemble professional orchestra

Lewisham Creative Chorus community creative choir

Followed by repeat performance at
8:30pm at the [Fellowship Inn](#), Bellingham



"Thomas Guthrie is hot news. His imagination knows no bounds"
OPERA NOW

"The performances were simply terrific throughout. Tremendous stuff"

The Guardian (2021 review of *Die schöne Müllerin*)

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of Schubert's song cycle *Die schöne Müllerin*, singer-director **Thomas Guthrie** ([Where have all the flowers gone?](#) lockdown video) and **Music and Theatre for All (MTFA)** present **STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES** at the **World Heart Beat** on 26 April introduced by **Classic FM** presenter **Alexander Armstrong**.

Developed with the Lewisham Creative Chorus, Thomas Guthrie and Vicky Olusanya have devised a new response to Schubert's song cycle with Guthrie's own arrangements for strings, guitar and percussion. Gwyneth Herbert, Lewisham Creative Chorus, Mind and Soul Choir of the Maudsley Hospital, the Outcry Ensemble and Vox Urbane will perform the hour-long **STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES** in London's most exciting new venue, the World Heart Beat Embassy Gardens. This will be followed by a second performance at the Fellowship Inn in Bellingham later the same evening.



Schubert often accompanied his songs on the guitar, calling on friends to improvise on any instrument available. With this premise, Guthrie was keen to return these songs to informal, social settings, to capture the sense of storytelling amongst friends.

[WATCH](#)

Thomas Guthrie sings first song from his forthcoming Schubert's ***Die schöne Müllerin*** recording with Barokksolistene on Rubicon Classics



To mark the 200th anniversaries of *Die schöne Müllerin* (2023), *Winterreise* (2027) and *Schwanengesang* (2028), Guthrie has been developing and performing new arrangements in collaboration with the riotous Barokksolistene (aka 'the Alehouse boys', dir. Bjarte Eike) to critical acclaim over the past few years. Singles of individual songs will be released from June ahead of the full recording of the

arrangement of *Die schöne Müllerin* released on Rubicon in autumn 2023, supported by Arts Council England, the Cockayne Foundation and Scops Arts Trust.

By extension, he has now brought these Schubert songs to the Lewisham Creative Chorus for their own reinvention 'STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES'.

As Guthrie explains:

"Storytelling is about community - it was in the 1820s and it is now. It brings people together, educates, entertains, gives a sense of belonging, identity, self and awareness of others. All music, all theatre is storytelling, and my musical and theatrical journey as an adult has been about discovering a kind of engagement that discovers connections through improvisation, spontaneity, collective collaboration and creativity. With each step on the journey, I've come to understand that this is the world of Schubert songs too."

LEWISHAM CREATIVE CHORUS

Inspired during the lockdowns of the early 2020s to re-assess his work and reconnect with a more authentic sense of storytelling, Guthrie sought - through the charity he founded, MTFA - to engage with his local community to create and celebrate the best quality music and theatre. After *Where Have All The Flowers Gone*, the charity launched Lewisham Urban Opera, based on experiences Guthrie had had while leading the Royal Opera House's *Write an Opera* programme. It was devised and performed with local residents and jazz legend Gwyneth Herbert, among other top professionals, as part of the London Borough of Culture Celebrations in Lewisham 2022.



Lewisham Creative Chorus is the legacy of this endeavour, and since the opera finished it has been busy creating its first Lewisham Song Cycle, as a response to *Die schöne Müllerin*.

THOMAS GUTHRIE



Thomas Guthrie is an innovative and award-winning British director and musician working in theatre and music to tell stories in vivid, new and direct ways.

A former Jette Parker Young Artist Stage Director at the Royal Opera House in London, his revival of David McVicar's *Die Zauberflöte* there won *What's On Stage Best Revival* 2018. His own critically-acclaimed productions of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Die Zauberflöte* at Longborough Festival Opera led to an invitation to direct Wagner's *Der Fliegende*

Holländer there in 2018 (subsequently called '*one of the best productions at this venue I have seen*' by Rupert Christiansen in the Telegraph). He directed *Aida* at the Liceu in 2020, *Semele* in Paris, Rome, London and Barcelona in 2019 and his 2020 production of Gagliano's rare 1608 opera *La Dafne* – created in a week with young singers at the Brighton Early Music Festival – was nominated for a 2020 RPS Award.

With a reputation for stylish, unfussy, energetic, physical, and theatrical work, the clarity of the storytelling, the commitment of the performers and a pre-eminence of musical values are at the heart of his productions.

Tom also works with non-professionals of all ages and backgrounds. Some of his most thrilling projects have been in this field, including work with Streetwise Opera, the Prison Choir Project, the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, and the Royal Opera House, through whom he has inspired hundreds to connect with their inner Caruso and raise the roof. His production of *Ludd and Isis*, a new opera commissioned to launch the ROH's new Production Park in Thurrock, involving a cast of hundreds, including professionals and amateurs of all ages, was acclaimed as '*one of the Royal Opera House's grandest achievements*' (Opera).

Thomas is the founder and artistic director of the charity Music and Theatre for All, former Guest Artistic Advisor to the York Early Music Festival, was Belknap Fellow at Princeton University, New Jersey in 2017, and is proud to sing and play with Bjarte Eike's Alehouse Boys.

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