

PRESTON OPERA'S AMBITIOUS PLANS

Preparations for the Company's Guild Year production of Verdi's opera AIDA are gathering pace and, at the time of writing, auditions are being held for the principal parts. Preston Opera Chairman, Geoff Horton, is excited by the prospects and by the interest in the auditions of singers from a wide area. He is acutely aware that many obstacles have to be overcome before the opera is staged but the essential planning is taking shape with confidence.

The production will require a substantial budget and the Company intends to support the staging with a larger orchestra than has been possible for some years so as to give the work the colouring and the singers the appropriate support. To facilitate this the Company are seeking to raise the necessary financial resources to meet the inevitable costs and, as a step in this direction, they are mounting two operatic concerts under the title AN OPERA CABARET EVENING in St John's Minster, Preston, on Friday and Saturday evenings, December 2nd and 3rd. The Company will perform solo, ensemble and choral items from a host of well-known operas built around the themes of winter, something spiritual, fun and a Grand Finale. The price of admission will be £15 (concessions £13, children £7.50) and the admission price will include a buffet supper. Tickets are selling fast; early application is recommended to 01772 719137 or via www.prestonopera.org.uk/tickets.htm or barbaraforsshaw@virginmedia.com. The conductors for the concerts will be Dr Colin Beeson, the company's Musical Director, and Barrie Wright who, as Chorus Master, is rehearsing the chorus with vigour. Preston Opera are delighted to acknowledge the support of SHEARINGS HOLIDAYS who are sponsoring the concerts.

Following these performances work will begin in earnest on AIDA. Many readers will remember Preston Opera's presentation of NABUCCO at the 1992 Guild and it is hoped that AIDA will provide more vivid memories and be equally enjoyed. To make this a reality more tenors and basses are needed to add to the Company's strength. Applications to participate in the opera in this capacity or to assist with sponsorship will be welcomed by Company Secretary, Barbara Walsh, on 01772 784578. Three performances of the opera are scheduled for June 27, 29 & 30, 2012. WNB

THE SHEPHERD LIBRARY ALADDIN

Dr Richard Shepherd (1694 – 1761) physician and former Mayor of Preston bequeathed his library to the people of Preston. To mark the 250th anniversary of his gift some of the amazing rare books are to be displayed about the Harris Museum and Art Gallery during the period 26th November, 2011, to 26th May, 2012. This affords a wonderful opportunity to see part of a collection accumulated during the first half of the eighteenth century.

This year's pantomime at the Charter Theatre is Aladdin starring Ted Robbins. The panto runs from Dec 6th until Jan 2nd though there will be no performances on Dec 12th and 19th nor on Christmas Day nor New Year's Day. Times of performances are shown in the Guild Hall "What's On" brochure and tickets may be obtained by contacting the Box Office on 0845 344 2012.

GUILD YEAR JOINT VENTURE

Musical societies based in the Preston area will come together to present a concert in the Guild Hall on Saturday, March 31st. The societies participating are Preston Cecilian Choral Society, Preston College, Preston Musical Comedy Society, Preston Opera and Preston Orpheus Choir. Each will present its own 'spot' and all will combine for the finale of the concert to sing one of the first performances of a work which has been composed for the Cultural Olympics by Orlando Gough.

DANCE

PRESTON FOLK DANCE CLUB continue their weekly classes at the Galloway Hall, Brackenbury Rd, off Lytham Rd, Fulwood on the following Monday evenings:-

Dec 5, 12 & 19, Jan 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 and Feb 6, 13, 20 & 27. The sessions run from 7.45 until 10pm and further details are available from Jeff Thomas on 01257 791323.

CIRCLE DANCE hold further sessions on December 6 and 20 and on Feb 7 and 21. On Dec 20th the evening will include a Xmas/midwinter vegetarian Jacob's Join. Whilst the regular classes will not be held in January there may be a social event, details – 01772 793658. Contact may be made by e mail to rosmary.forrest@talktalk.net

PLAYHOUSE PRODUCTIONS

PRESTON DRAMA CLUB'S production, SNAKE IN THE GRASS, relates the problems confronting Annabel following the death of her father; Alice, the nurse, alleges that he was murdered by Annabel's sister, Miriam. The price of her silence is £100,000 – money they haven't got. Miriam devises a gruesome solution.

PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER, which is to be presented by Broughton Players, finds busy Dr Richard Forth in an awkward yet close friendship with his ex-girlfriend while his wife, Barbara, is chronically and mysteriously ill. Richard believes her symptoms are psychological but when a stranger claims to have known Richard's second fiancé – a woman Richard insists does not exist – Barbara's health worsens....

BUSYBODY (Preston Drama Club) features Det. Supt. Harry Baxter plagued by a head cold and two 'busybodies' – a corpse that disappears and Mrs Piper, the officious and chatty office cleaner who discovered it. All the office staff and the corpse's wife are suspect but when the corpse walks in alive and well this is almost the last straw for Baxter.

See Arts Diary for dates of these productions.

COMPANY OF VOICES

Our autumn season has taken off very rapidly as, at the time of writing, we have participated in four events during the past five weeks, with at least five more dates in the diary before Christmas.

We thoroughly enjoyed singing in the three choirs concert during the Preston Arts Festival, with the Elizabethan Singers and the Rawstorne Singers, and it will be no surprise to anyone that we are now commencing rehearsals for Christmas events. The first is to be a service on 27 November, the first Sunday of Advent, at Ribbleson Parish Church, to be followed by a choral communion service at the Minster on 1 December, a carol concert at St Mary's, Brownedge, on 9 December and the Lancashire Evening Post Candlelit Carol Service at the Minster on 14 December. A very solemn and moving occasion which preceded all these was the annual Remembrance Day service at County Hall on 11 November.

We are always happy to welcome new singers and we'd be particularly pleased to have more sopranos. We rehearse in the Minster every Thursday from 12.30 to 2pm, and we look forward to seeing you.

Jean Miller, Publicity Officer, 01772 718064.

December - February 2012

Issue 74

Preston Arts News

www.prestonarts.com

PRESTON ORPHEUS CHOIR

The 29th Festival for Christmas will be staged at the Guild Hall on Saturday, the 10th December at 7.30pm. Freckleton Brass Band will be making their third appearance in the Festival under the baton of guest conductor, Michael Fowles. The Heather Fitchett Dancers, with the band, will be taking us to the realm of Disney Land, plus the ever popular Christmas Cavalcade. Woodplumpton Junior School Choir make a return visit, as do St Aidan's Primary School children to present their version of the Nativity with readings by Canon Burns. Another attraction will be the Maghull Handbell Ringers. We welcome back our Welsh tenor, Malcolm Williams, and as usual, Paul Greenhalgh will be at the piano. The show will be compered by Mary and Harry Duckworth.

In 1982 Harry Duckworth, the Musical Director of Preston Orpheus Choir, decided he would like the Choir to present a Carol Concert in the Guild Hall. Little did he think that the show would still be a major attraction 30 years later. This year's Festival will be Harry's last concert with the Choir - he is retiring after 33 years at the helm. The Choir has only had three conductors in its long history. In January Preston Orpheus will have their fourth Musical Director – Roselise Gentile from Italy. MCD

PRESTON MUSICAL COMEDY SOCIETY - JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Winners of the Best Pantomime Award at the NODA District 2 awards for the last two years, PMCS are sure you won't be disappointed in this year's fabulous production of Jack & The Beanstalk at the Playhouse Theatre from Friday 9th to Sunday 18th December. Last year's production team of Eddie Regan (Director), Janet Calman (Musical Director) and Amanda Rogers (Choreographer) reunite for this production and they are joined by Julie Oldfield as Assistant to the Director.

Dreamer Jack's daft brother Simon sells the family cow, Buttermilk, for a handful of magic beans. Once planted a giant beanstalk grows which leads up to the kingdom of the horrible giant Buster Gut-Bucket. Join Jack on his adventure as he climbs the beanstalk to rescue the beautiful Princess Primrose, meeting many hilarious fairy tale characters along the way including Dame Dotty Dimple, Fairy Sugardust, Simple Simon, Rancid the Ratman, Snatchet and Scarper and the wicked witch Piccalilli. Once again this traditional pantomime is scripted to ensure there are laughs for the whole family!

Tickets are held at 2010 prices - £ 9 for adults and £7 for children, students and OAP's. Family tickets are £30 (2 adults & 2 children) and for group bookings the 11th ticket is free for every 10 tickets bought for the same performance. Tickets can be ordered through the box office on 01772 797828 or 07745 745952 or in person Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm from Preston CVS, Guildhall Arcade, Lancaster Road, Preston (cash or cheque only). See the website for further details www.prestonmusicalcomedy.co.uk. RC

PRESTON AND DISTRICT U3A ARTS FESTIVAL

U3A stands for the University of the Third Age, which is a self help organisation for people who are retired or approaching retirement, providing educational, creative and leisure opportunities in a friendly environment. Local groups draw upon the knowledge, experience and skills of their own members to organise and provide interest and activity groups in accordance with the wishes of the membership.

The Preston and District U3A, which started in June 2007, can now offer a variety of interest groups, over twenty altogether. These range from Creative Writing to Crossword Solving, Family History to Folk Dancing etc. Various outings and visits to the Theatre are also arranged. We have a monthly meeting on the third Thursday of the month (except August) at St Cuthbert's Church Centre, Lytham Rd, Fulwood, Preston from 2pm to 4pm. The main purpose of these meetings is to bring all the U3A members together, where we catch up on group news, have a speaker and enjoy light refreshments.

If you would like more information about Preston and District U3A please contact either Sue Wright (Chair – 01772 717784 or e mail sue@wright22.eclipse.co.uk) or Rose Cousins (01772 795807) or Muriel Whittaker (01772 744877 or e mail muwhitt@talktalk.net) or visit our website (www.u3asites.org.uk/preston/) We are a registered charity – no 1141371. RC

Preston Arts Association as promoters of the PRESTON ARTS FESTIVAL which was held during the first half of October wish to thank all the performers, speakers, tutors and facilitators who participated in the event. The Association is also very appreciative of the generous support of the sponsors for the Festival. The 2012 Festival, falling as it does in Guild Year, is under review but it may take place slightly earlier than hitherto, probably in mid-September. Further details will appear in Arts News in due course. WNB

PRESTON ARTS NEWS

Produced by Preston Arts Association.
We acknowledge the support of Preston City Council.

Copies are available free of charge from local libraries, local arts societies, at the Guildhall, Travel Information Office in the Bus Station, Waterstones Bookshop, Alston Hall and other arts venues in the area.

Entries in the Arts Diary are free. Information and any news items should be sent to Bill Borrow, 14 Fulwood Hall Lane, Preston PR2 8DB.
Email: william.borrow@btinternet.com

The next issue will cover the period March to August 2012. The closing date for material will be 31st January 2011.

PRESTON ARTS ASSOCIATION

SUBSCRIPTIONS : SOCIETIES

(more than 50 members) £10 per annum

SOCIETIES (less than 50 members) £7.50 per annum

ASSOCIATE

(Individual) Member £5 per annum.

Should be forwarded to:

Mike Cracknell, 25 Aspels Cres, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 9AN (01772 748547)
Cheques payable to PAA

VENUES

Embroiderers' Guild, St Andrew's Church Hall, Tulketh Road, Ashton, 01772 742710
Galloway's Singers, Howick House, Penwortham, 01772 746840

Harris Music Club, St. John's Minster, 01772 744714

Preston Art Society, Queens Drive Primary School, Black Bull Lane, Fulwood 01772 718144
Preston Card Making Group, St. Christopher's Church, Lea. 01772 463670

Preston Cecilian Choral Society, St. Augustine's Primary School, St. Austin's Place, Preston. 01772 456666

Preston Historical Society, The Central Methodist Church, Lune Street, Preston. 01772 861637

Preston Lacemakers, United Reformed Church Hall, Penwortham. 01772 747403

Preston Musical Comedy Society, Harris Primary School, Wychnor, Fulwood, Preston 01772 864567

Preston Opera, Carey Baptist Centre, Pole Street, Preston 01772 784578

Preston Orpheus Choir, St Pius School, Garstang Rd, Fulwood 01772 612857

Preston Playhouse, Market Street West, Preston 01772 252288

Preston Poets' Society, PRESCAP Arts & Media Centre, Fox St. 01257 254331

Preston Recorded Music Society, (PRMS) St. George's Church, Lune St, 01772 705220

Preston Photographic Society, Fulwood Conservative

Club, Blackpool Road/Garstang Road Junction 01772 746314

Preston Movie Makers, Galloway Hall, Fulwood, 01772 729770

Rawstorne Singers, 01772 462202

Full details of all Member societies obtainable by logging on to www.prestonarts.com

CECILIAN'S START 84TH SEASON WITH A NEGLECTED CLASSIC

The Cecilians explore new repertoire this season under their Italian Music Director, Marco Fanti, in the form of Luigi Cherubini's beautiful and too-rarely performed Requiem in C minor. Marco will once again fly from Bologna to conduct the concert at St Michael & All Angels, Ashton, on Sat 19 November, which will also include four short choral pieces by Liszt, in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the composer's birth. Our assistant musical director, Graham Jackson, who has shouldered the burden of rehearsing the choir while Marco has been unavoidably absent for most of this term, will demonstrate his virtuosity at the piano with Liszt's Consolations, and our rehearsal accompanist, the talented Alastair Mackenzie, will be at the organ.

The Choir will be returning to St Mary's and St Michael's, Garstang on Saturday 17 December, for another Carol Concert, following the sell-out event last year. The repertoire will include a few of the lesser known carols mixed in with the popular 'faithfuls', and with plenty of opportunity for audience participation.

Planning continues for the joint concert next March as a choral tribute to celebrate the Guild 2012. More about this in the next edition.

We continue to rehearse at St Augustine's Primary School, St Austin's Place, Avenham, each Monday from 7.30 to 9.30pm. We have welcomed a good number of new members recently and will be delighted to see new choristers in all voices (especially basses!) come along if only to test the water. Keep up with our latest news and announcements online at www.cecilians.org.uk or find us on Facebook. MC/JACB

BRIEF NEWS ITEMS RECORDED MUSIC SOCIETY

The search is on for Preston's YOUNG MUSICIAN OF THE GUILD and readers may wish to note that the final of the event is to be held in the Guild Hall on Saturday, 30th June, 2012

Preston FM's weekly, programme, PRESTON ARTS SCENE which has hitherto been broadcast on Monday evenings, has now moved to noon each Friday with a repeat the following Sunday at 10am. The programme can be heard by tuning in to 103.2FM

Raymond Gubbay presents CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT in Preston's Guild Hall on Friday, 23rd December, at 7.30pm. The conductor this year is former Fulwood resident Stuart Stratford who conducted Preston Opera's production of L'Elisir D'Amore in 1999. He has subsequently worked at many prestigious venues throughout the country and has developed a promising career.

LANCASHIRE SINFONIETTA'S two concerts for children presented during the Preston Arts Festival were sold out. Their coming series of Candlelight Concertos does not include a visit to Preston but they will be presenting concerts in this series in St Annes (Dec 8), Lancaster (Dec 9) and Burnley (Dec 10). Full details from the Box Office on 01524 594151 or via www.lancs-sinf.com

COURSES

ALSTON HALL

- 1 Dec An Afternoon with Vera Waters
- 9 Christmas Recital by Andrew Wilde
- 11 Carolling Brass with Entrada
- 20-22 Jan Puccini and Popular Opera - Richard Gregson*
- 24 Creative Writing – Jane Eagland
- 4 Feb Writing for Beginners - Jane Eagland
- 7 Lacemaking for Pleasure - Pat Bradford
- 11 Botanical Art in Pencil – Julie Small
- 17 A Snapshot of Central Preston in the 1950's – Stephen Sartin
- 20-21 Chamber Music for Preformed Quartets – Louise Latham*
- 25 Creative Writing – Jane Eagland
- 26 Beginners Botanical Painting (Part 2) – Franky Rodwell

* Denotes residential course.

Details of the above and all other courses at Alston Hall are obtainable by phoning 01772 784661

EXHIBITIONS

HARRIS MUSEUM & ART GALLERY

10 Dec-14 Jan

HARRIS OPEN EXHIBITION – WORK BY PRESTON BASED ARTISTS

Until 26 May

THE SHEPHERD LIBRARY AT 300.

Until 30 June

GLOBAL THREADS: ASIAN TEXTILES AND FASHION TODAY.

Further details of all events in the Harris Museum may be obtained by logging on to www.harrismuseum.org.uk or by telephoning 01772 905414

PRESTON CARD CLUB

continue to meet on the first Wednesday (7 – 9) and the third Wednesday (1.30-3.30) in St Christopher's Church Hall, Blackpool Rd, Lea.

PRESTON EMBROIDERERS' GUILD

meet on the first Saturday every month from 10 – 4 in St Andrew's Church Hall, Tulketh Rd, Ashton.

PRESTON ART SOCIETY

will hold Life Drawing Workshops on Jan 21 and Feb 18 from 1 – 4pm.
Please contact Jim Pye for details – 01772 862500.

ARTS DIARY

DECEMBER 2011

- 1 7.30 Preston Poets. Christmas Party with Jacob's Join.
7.45 Preston Movie Makers. Annual Southport 50/50 night at Preston.
7.45 Preston Photographic Soc. Showing "3 on a theme" projected image competition.
- 2 12.30 St George's Church. Students from Chetham's School of Music.
7.30 St John's Minster, Preston. An Opera Gala Evening with Preston Opera
7.30 Preston Recorded Music Soc. INSPIRATIONS – Kate Andrews
- 3 7.30 St John's Minster, Preston. An Opera Gala Evening with Preston Opera.
- 5 7.15 Prn Historical Soc. The Slave Trade of Lancashire – Janet Nelson.
- 8 7.30 The Rawstorne Singers. Friends of the Harris Christmas Concert – Members & Friends event.
7.45 Prn Photo Soc. Show 2nd Monthly Competition entries.
- 9 7.30 PRMS A SEASONAL SELECTION – Peter Kirkham.
- 10 7.30 Guild Hall. Preston Orpheus Choir presents the 29th FESTIVAL FOR CHRISTMAS.
- 14 1.0 St John's Minster. Harris Music Club. Emily Andrews (fl), David Massey (pf)
- 7.30 St Saviour's, Bamber Bridge. The Rawstorne Singers Christmas Concert. Please ring 01772 462202 to confirm date and possible change of venue.
- 16 12.30 St George's Church. The Astrum Guitar Duo.
7.30 PRMS Christmas Soiree.
- 17 8.0 St Mary's & St Michael's, Garstang. Preston Cecilian Choral Soc. CAROL CONCERT.
- 31 9.45 New Year's Eve Prom. Manchester Concert Orch. Jonathan Stoughton (ten), Duncan Rock (bar) Cond. John Pryce-Jones.

JANUARY 2012

- 5 7.30 Preston Poets. AGM and Members' poems.
7.45 Preston Mv Mkrs. A selection of Films from Unica-Gdansk 2009.
7.45 Prn Ph Soc. Show 3rd Monthly Competition entrees.
- 9 7.15 Prn Hist. Soc. New Light on Old Preston – Dr David Hunt.
- 10 7.0 Preston Art Soc. Stephen Sartin – Lecture with slides.
7.45 Prn Ph. Soc. Portrait Group (4th meeting)
- 12 7.45 Preston Mv Mkrs. 2 Competitions - Holiday and Barrett (subject: Village Life)
7.45 Prn Ph Soc Tom Court "An Evening of Digital Audio and Visual"
- 13 7.30 PRMS FOLLOW MY LIEDER – Christine Buckley.
- 15 2.30 Guild Hall. RLPO Concert "Beethoven's Pastoral". Nikolai Lugansky (pf). Cond. Vasily Petrenko
- 18 1.0 Harris Music Club. Soloists from Chetham's School.
- 18-21 7.30 Playhouse. Preston Drama Club present SNAKE IN THE GRASS, by Alan Ayckbourn.
- 19 7.45 Prn Mv Mkrs. Filming – Part 4
7.45 Prn Ph. Soc. 3 Way Battle – Preston. Chorley and Leyland at Preston Photographic Soc.
- 20 7.30 PRMS MEMBERS' NIGHT.
- 24 7.0 Preston Art Soc. Richard Cross – Drawing Portrait (Demo).
- 26 7.45 Prn Mv Mkrs. Our Phil on Animation.
7.45 Prn. Ph. Soc. Members' Evening/Mini Session.
- 26-28 7.30 St Martin's Parish Chapel Hall, Broadway. The Hall Players present THE REUNION, by Peter Gordon. Comedy and confusion combine in this hilarious but poignant story of 'small people' in a 'big world.' Box Office 01772 863801. Tickets £7 (Conc. £6).
- 27 7.30 PRMS Tim Jackson.
- 2 7.30 Preston Poets.
7.45 Prn Mv Mkrs. A Film Taken within 500 metres of my Home – 10 minute max.
7.45 Prn. Ph. Soc. Show 4th Monthly Competition entries.
- 3 7.30 PRMS Tom Rainford.
7.30 Guild Hall. Alfie Boe (ten)
- 6 7.15 Prn Hist. Soc. The Workhouse and the Infirmary – Dr Stephen Cairns.
- 7 7.0 Prn Art Soc. Drawing with Wire – Workshop led by Linda Hull (small charge for materials)
7.30 Guild Hall. RLPO Concert "The Film Music of John Williams". Cond. Carl Davis CBE (Hon).
- 8-11 7.30 Broughton Club, Whittingham Lane. The Club Players present BUSYBODY, a comedy by Jack Popplewell. Box Office 01772 774208.
- 8-11 7.30 Playhouse. Broughton Players present PRESCRIPTION FOR MURDER, a thriller by Norman Robbins.
- 9 7.45 Prn Mv Mkrs. Colin Lamb keeps us informed.
7.45 Prn. Ph. Soc. Andrew Davies "Wedding Photographs" – a professional's view.
- 10 7.30 PRMS
- 15 1.0 Harris Music Club. William Oinn (Ob), Yshani Perinpanayagam (pf).
- 16 7.45 Prn Mv Mkrs. Ron Challen entertains us.
7.45 Prn. Ph. Soc. Folio/Open CD
- 17 7.30 PRMS OFF AND ON - Ian Drummond.
- 21 7.0 Prn Art Soc. TBA
- 21 & 23-25 7.30 St Mary's Church Hall, Cop Lane, Penwortham. St Mary's ADS present INDEPENDENT MEANS, an Edwardian family comedy by Stanley Houghton. In a provincial town in Northern England, the play is set in 1912, just prior to the First World War and reflects many social concerns of the day. (Box Office 0370 770 5945). Tickets £5 (Conc. £4.50)
- 22-25 7.30 Playhouse. Preston Drama Club present BUSYBODY, a comedy thriller by Jack Popplewell.
- 23 7.45 Prn Mv Mkrs. Annual and 1 Minute Competitions.
7.45 Prn. Ph. Soc. Lecture and AV Competition: Harry Emmett "The Shetlands Photoquiz" (interactive) will judge our AV comp entries.
- 24 7.30 PRMS. FOUR GOOD LEGS – Stuart Parker.
- 28-3 Mch 7.30 Playhouse. Preston Gilbert & Sullivan Soc. Present IOLANTHE.