

COLOMBO TUTTO TONDO: OPERA BUFFA

Story of Christopher Columbus

A funny and witty tale for every age with hidden treasure chest, pirate's ship, cocktails on the beach and lots of songs

Premiere performance, led by Pietro Lusvardi with the Gatto Marte Ensemble with Wendy Goodson, soprano, Fiona MacDonald, contralto, Angus McAllister, tenor Julian Tovey, baritone.

Sunday 1 Nov 2009, 7.00pm to 9.00pm, Main Hall, Brittan Building

Reception: drinks and canapes at 6.30pm, foyer, Brittan Building

Lyrics and Script by Pietro Lusvardi

Music by Pietro Lusvardi with the Gatto Marte Ensemble

Characters:

Columbus, baritone, Julian Tovey

Colombina, soprano, Wendy Goodson

Queen Isabel of Spain, contralto, Fiona MacDonald

King Ferdinand of Spain & Diablito, tenor, Angus McAllister

Narrator, Ronan Paterson

Ensemble:

Pietro Lusvardi, double bass, harmonica, percussion, banjo

Maximilian Brooks, piano, percussion, keyboard

Nino Cotone, violin, hang

Steve Burnett, bassoon, clarinet, sax

Kristoffer Wright, drum kit, percussion.

Culture on Campus at Teesside University is delighted to have the opportunity to premiere the new Opera Buffa **Colombo Tutto Tondo** (*Christopher Columbus the world is round*) by Pietro Lusvardi with the Gatto Marte ensemble. This Opera Buffa is made up of ten arias, sung in Italian and English, and instrumental pieces interwoven with narration. The story, witty and funny, tells the tale of Christopher Columbus in a style inspired by the Commedia dell'Arte, where the narrator and the singers share lines on stage. As well as being a piece to entertain all ages, the opera serves as an educational tool, especially for young people.

This Opera Buffa features four soloists and narrator. It is performed by the Italian ensemble Gatto Marte: Pietro Lusvardi, double bass, harmonica, percussion and

banjo; Maximilian Brooks on piano, percussion, keyboard; Nino Cotone, violin and hang. Steve Burnett, bassoon, clarinet and sax; Kristoffer Wright, drum kit and percussion will join Gatto Marte for this premiere performance.

Pietro Lusvardi. An accomplished soloist and composer, Italian double bass player Pietro Lusvardi was born in Lugano, Switzerland. In 1997 he earned his degree from the Conservatorio of Como in Italy with a special emphasis on the contrabass. Since then, his contrabass has carried him around the globe and led to performances with numerous musicians and orchestras. Lusvardi's music ranges from serenely beautiful harmonic sounds to rhythmical jazz improvisations, and is always an interesting treat for the ears. Lusvardi has published two albums featuring original music written for solo double bass and seven albums with the Gatto Marte ensemble. He now lives with his family in North Yorkshire.

Gatto Marte is a chamber ensemble of classical background with an attitude close to jazz and a twist of folk music, from Eastern Europe through the Mediterranean towards the North. Piano, violin, bassoon and double bass, are the protagonists of this musical journey. The music is descriptive and imaginative; it often recollects little stories, which can be comical, tragicomically dramatic, with an ironical touch. This attitude has led the ensemble to compose music for silent films such as *Malombra* by Carmine Gallone, *The Gold Rush* by Charlie Chaplin, *Balloonatic* by Buster Keaton, *A Woman* by Charlie Chaplin and *lately Faust* by Frederich Murnau. The ensemble has published eight albums and it has played in numerous venues and in international festivals in Europe and in the USA.

Wendy Goodson, soprano, began her musical career in light opera before studying singing with Trinity College, London. Concert and recital work take up much of her time and she has broadcast on national radio, appeared as a soloist in the recent Bach Festival in Leipzig and sings regularly for the "Festival Mitte Europa" in Germany and the Czech Republic. She sings with many choirs and has time to teach at St Peters School York.

Fiona MacDonald, mezzosoprano, studied at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. Operatic roles are many including the title role in *Carmen* for Civit Hills Opera and *Susuki* in *Madam Butterfly* for Columbia Artists American tour. A founder member of Eloquent Protest, she will perform in the annual Remembrance Day concert with Tony Benn in London on November 8th 2009.

Angus McAllister, tenor, studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Opera credits include Lysander in *A Midsummer's Nights Dream* for the Aix en Provence Festival and tour. Israelitish Messenger and ensemble Handel's *Samson* for De Nederlanse Opera. Mengone *Lo Speciale* Haydn for Opera Minora in the Netherlands. Radio live broadcasts are on ARTE and NED 2.

Julian Tovey, baritone. Julian returns to sing with Culture on Campus following his successful solo performance in Spring 09. Truly international, he made his debut with New York Philharmonic December 2008 and at Milan's Teatro alla Scala in May 2008 as Winston in Lorin Maazel's opera, *1984*. He sings with English National Opera and has appeared throughout Europe and in Japan in concert. Recent appearances include Brahms's *German Requiem* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Orff's *Carmina burana* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra; the world premiere of Derek Bermel's *Natural Selection* with Ensemble 10-10 in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival; and Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* with the North Netherlands Orchestra. Julian was born in Guisborough and for many years he played viola in the Cleveland Youth Orchestra. He won first prize in the Wagner Society of Great Britain Bayreuth Bursary Competition..... and the rest is history as they say.

Part of our series of events celebrating Culture on Campus

Tickets are £10.00, concessions £8.00, under 18's free.

Please book your ticket by emailing j.webster@tees.ac.uk

Tickets will be available on the door

Any queries, please email j.webster@tees.ac.uk