



Scottish
Opera



COSÌ FAN TUTTE

Mozart

11 September 2021, 7:00pm | Perth Concert Hall

Così fan tutte

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Opera buffa in two acts

Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte

First performed at the Burgtheater, Vienna, on 26 January 1790

Please note, there will be a 20-minute interval between Acts I & II

Charlie Drummond • Fiordiligi

Margo Arsane • Dorabella, sister of Fiordiligi

Catriona Hewitson • Despina, the women's personal assistant

Shengzhi Ren • Ferrando, Dorabella's boyfriend

Arthur Bruce • Guglielmo, Fiordiligi's lover

Michael Mofidian • Don Alfonso, game show host

Orchestra of Scottish Opera

Chorus of *Così fan tutte*

Roxana Haines • director

Stuart Stratford • conductor

Supported by **The Robertson Trust & Scottish Opera's
Emerging Artists Benefactors**

Core funded by



Biography: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born: Salzburg, 1756. • Died: Vienna, 1791

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart is known the world over as a child prodigy, and was heavily promoted as such by his father Leopold during his earliest years. And with good reason: he composed his first symphony at the age of nine, his first piano concerto at 11, and his first opera at just 13.

In terms of opera, however, it wasn't until the composer was approaching his 30s (and therefore, though he didn't know it, near the end of his brief life) that Mozart created the mature works that we particularly admire today, notably his trio of operas with librettos by the Venetian writer Lorenzo Da Ponte: *The Marriage of Figaro* (1786), *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Così fan tutte* (1790).

Though born in Salzburg, and initially employed by the city's Prince Archbishop Hieronymus Graf Colloredo, Mozart felt his talents did not receive the recognition they deserved there and in 1781 he resettled in Vienna, made the musical capital of the 18th-century world by the court of arts connoisseur Emperor Joseph II. Though Mozart had his financial struggles as a freelance composer and performer, he nonetheless managed to make his reputation in the city at a time of revolution and war that caused significant problems right across the arts.

Despite dealing with periods of intensive work, financial pressures and mental stress, Mozart completed some of his most admired and sophisticated works – including the Singspiel *The Magic Flute*, the Clarinet Concerto and the unfinished Requiem, as well as *Così fan tutte* – during the last years of his life. The cause of his death in December 1791 is uncertain, though there's no evidence to suggest he was poisoned by fellow composer Antonio Salieri, despite persistent rumours since the decades following his death, as well as the plot line of Peter Shaffer's 1979 play *Amadeus* and the subsequent film by Miloš Forman.

Synopsis

Act I

Don Alfonso challenges Ferrando and Guglielmo to a bet: that their lovers – the sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi – will not remain faithful to them. The two young men pretend to leave for war, only to return in disguise. They set about seducing each other's lover; but initially get nowhere. Claiming to despair at the women's lack of interest, the men pretend to poison themselves, but the maid Despina – who's also in on the game – disguises herself as a doctor to bring them back from the brink of death. Under all this emotional pressure, Dorabella and Fiordiligi find their affections wavering.

Act II

Despina tells the sisters that there's nothing wrong with a bit of harmless flirtation. Alone with Guglielmo, Dorabella quickly gives in to his affections. Fiordiligi is less convinced, threatening to run to her lover on the battlefield, but in the end gives in to Ferrando too. With both women apparently seduced, the two men are quietly distraught. The sisters are keen to marry their new lovers immediately. Despina dresses up as a lawyer and does the honours. The two new husbands suddenly disappear, however, and Ferrando and Guglielmo apparently return from battle, horrified at what's been happening. Dorabella and Fiordiligi are embarrassed by their actions, but the two men also realise that their game wasn't without its risks. The charade is revealed, and Don Alfonso urges the four young lovers to learn their lesson.

Please note, there will be a 20-minute interval between Acts I & II

Director's note

In many ways, *Così fan tutte* is the perfect piece for our current times. It has a small cast and beautiful music, and it's light-hearted to entertain audiences. We made this production in 2020 for camera during the pandemic and it has been lovely to reconsider and adapt this show for live performance.

Last year, after reacquainting myself with the joys of *Così fan tutte*, I first tried to rationalise that our only connection to the audience was through the camera. With a lens, you can present detail and play with perspectives and I thought about that in the context of the opera. The proposition in the first scene is that we are in a sort of social experiment: will the men agree to woo each other's partners (in disguise) to discover if the women will be faithful?

From this, I realised the film could be set within the context of social experiment, and I began thinking about reality TV shows. There are Don Alfonso characters in our living rooms all the time, setting ridiculous challenges, pulling pranks and deceiving contestants. And we love watching them do it. Think of *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway*, the 'unexpected stars' of *Michael McIntyre's Big Show*, Graham Norton's humour, every American late-night TV host, and even Derren Brown, who often ventures into psychologically manipulative territory. Don Alfonso is an amalgamation of all these figures. The men in our story merely sign up for this experiment to see if their lovers are faithful or not, and we watch to see if they can catch them out in real time and win the big cash prize.

What was a real camera capturing Don Alfonso's antics, is now a prop camera representing the broadcast we had to do last year, and instead of audiences only able to watch at home, it is a pleasure to welcome you into the space as a live studio audience for 'The Game Show'.

Presenting *Così fan tutte* today raises many other questions beyond the technical ones. What is infidelity? Is this game morally sound? Why are we still presenting an opera about women being manipulated when there's no justice whatsoever for them? The only peace I have found here is that audiences before us have found the content challenging too. Maybe that's exactly what it's supposed to be — an opera that asks us why these issues are still present in our society, and encourages us to do something about them.

Roxana Haines
Director

Programme note

The questions start with the title itself. It might sometimes be glossed as *The School for Lovers*, the alternative title originally supplied by librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte. But in its most basic form – translated roughly as ‘All women are like that’ – the opera’s name poses problems before we’ve even heard a note of its music. Should we simply see the opera as being of its time? That’s a common defence for works that begin to show their difficulties as social attitudes change (even if the story that *Così fan tutte* tells actually stretches back centuries). Yet in many ways, *Così fan tutte* is also the opera by Mozart that’s most relevant and resonant to 21st-century audiences – perhaps because of the very problems it raises.

A lukewarm opening

Not much is known about *Così fan tutte*’s origins. Mozart began writing it in 1789, as his third collaboration with the Venetian poet and librettist Da Ponte, following the great successes the pair had already achieved with *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*. It was premiered on 26 January 1790 at Vienna’s Burgtheater, but had only a handful of performances before the run was cut short by the sudden death of Emperor Joseph II, and the ensuing period of mourning. When *Così fan tutte* re-emerged for a second run a few months later, its momentum had stalled, and it didn’t make much of an impact. Nonetheless, it was clearly a work that mattered to Mozart, for both financial and artistic reasons. At the time he was writing it, Austria, alongside its ally Russia, was at war with the Ottoman Empire (and in the context of that conflict, *Così fan tutte*’s plot line involving two men suddenly being called up to fight must have felt very real, and very immediate). As a result of the Austro-Russo-Turkish conflict’s fallout across Viennese society, and in common with our current pandemic times, every work opportunity for a struggling freelance musician was something to be treasured. But income aside, Mozart was concerned enough about *Così fan tutte*’s artistic ambitions to invite his friend and colleague Joseph Haydn to a private performance in his home in December 1789. The more senior composer’s reaction, sadly, isn’t known.

Following its rather lukewarm reception during Mozart’s lifetime, *Così fan tutte* had relatively few performances in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was considered somewhat distasteful and frivolous, even immoral, and in any case was entirely out of line with Romantic ideals of undying passion, all-consuming love. What performances of it there were often employed a whole new storyline and libretto in an attempt to circumvent Da Ponte’s sardonic game of affections. In one version, the two sisters Dorabella and Fiordiligi get to know of their lovers’ deceptions at the start of Act II, casting an entirely different light over the rest of the work.

Ancient partner swapping

It’s ironic, however, that *Così fan tutte* was looked upon so witheringly, since its themes of disguise and partner-swapping actually date back to antiquity. In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid recounts the tale of Procris, whose husband Cephalus is persuaded to attempt to seduce her while disguised as another man, goaded on by goddess of the dawn Eos, whose

attentions Cephalus spurned while out hunting. In the seventh day of his *Decameron*, Boccaccio tells of a husband disguising himself as a priest to hear his wife's confession – in which she reveals that she loves another priest who comes to visit her every night. Even in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, disguise in the form of magical transformations and love potions tests and disrupts existing relations between a quartet of humans and a couple of royal fairies.

Precedents in historical literature aside, however, there's no getting away from the fact that, at least on certain levels, *Così fan tutte* is a deeply unsavoury creation. Eminent critic and musicologist Joseph Kerman wrote: 'Even the most devout Mozartian will have to admit that there is something unsatisfactory about *Così*', going on to call it 'Mozart's most problematic work'. Perhaps in an attempt to let Mozart off the hook, critics down the ages have blamed that unsatisfactoriness on what they see as a gaping chasm between the composer's sophisticated, warm, emotional music and the icy cynicism of Da Ponte's libretto. They have a point – and despite little evidence of how the two men actually worked on the opera, it seems that Mozart had scant input into the libretto, simply setting what Da Ponte gave him. Nonetheless, it's indisputable that it was Mozart, not Da Ponte, who chose the opera's contentious title.

Music versus libretto

So on the face of it, we might imagine Mozart attempting to inject some human warmth and compassion into Da Ponte's rather unpalatable storyline through his deeply expressive music. But are things really as simple as that? In basic terms, Mozart and Da Ponte show us two apparently happy couples – Dorabella with Ferrando, and Fiordiligi with Guglielmo – and the attempt by Don Alfonso, for reasons that are never entirely clear, to demonstrate how easily the women will be unfaithful to their partners. Dorabella and Fiordiligi do indeed seem to be very much in love with their other halves, and understandably concerned about the idea that the two men might be whisked off to war and lose their lives in battle. But if that's really the case, it seems strange that there isn't a love duet for either of the original couples near the start. Maybe we're meant to take their affection as read, or maybe Mozart and Da Ponte simply want to move us on into the intrigues of the opera's later plot.

Even so, it's a peculiar omission – especially since, once Ferrando and Guglielmo return in disguise to seduce the women, Mozart supplies us with warm, heartfelt, emotionally convincing love music for the new couples. 'Il core vi dono' ('I give you my heart'), the Act II duet between the disguised Guglielmo and Dorabella, is fragile, tender and beautiful. Most importantly, it feels entirely authentic: the two lovers' vocal lines copy each other precisely, and frequent pauses conjure a sense of uncertainty and anticipation. Later, Mozart writes Fiordiligi's doubts at surrendering herself to her desires for the disguised Ferrando directly into their turbulent duet 'Fra gli amplessi in pochi istanti' ('Very soon I'll be in my lover's arms'). The love between them by the end of the duet feels all the more real and urgent for being so hard-fought and contested. At the beginning of the opera, the music for the two original couples sounds excited, enthusiastic, full of the eagerness of youth, but it hardly conveys the depths of emotion, honesty and vulnerability that Mozart

explores in Act II. It's almost as if his characters are in love with the idea of being in love at the start, only to discover its true meaning after the interval.

Even the voices Mozart calls for tell the same story. It feels unnatural and unlikely that tenor Ferrando could hitch up with mezzo Dorabella, and the same for soprano Fiordiligi and baritone Guglielmo. Musically, those matchings are all wrong – which Mozart clearly knows, and knows that his audience knows, since the original couples don't even come together for duets at the start of the opera. Put Fiordiligi's soprano with Ferrando's tenor, and Dorabella's mezzo with Guglielmo's baritone, however, and it all makes sense. It's almost as if, through the music he writes for his quartet of lovers, and through the very voices he uses, Mozart is highlighting contrasts between a formal, conventional, accepted perception of love, and something truer, rawer and more natural. And if interrogating accepted conventions isn't something that chimes with the Enlightenment beliefs that Mozart espoused, then few things are.

A passion for acting

Delving deeper still, however, there are also questions as to how much everyone in the opera is acting. Performance, of course, is central to the opera's core plot line, in Ferrando and Guglielmo's apparent departure and their return as different people. And unless we conclude that their feelings towards their new partners are real, or perhaps become real over time, we might assume the men are acting, too, when they attempt to seduce Dorabella and Fiordiligi. This whole set-up raises questions, however, about Ferrando and Guglielmo's own motivations. Why are they so happy and eager to gamble with their partners' affections following a simple prompt from a stranger? Are they really so gullible and cold-hearted as to want to demonstrate and defend their partners' fidelity by attempting to break it? Or were they perhaps pretending in their feelings, even if they didn't know it, all along?

Stepping back from the four lovers, Don Alfonso and Despina seem to exist on a separate level. He is the scheming mastermind behind the whole affair; even if we never fully understand what his purpose has been. Even that seems intentional: Mozart denies Don Alfonso any extended solo arias, so we never really get inside his head. Despina joins him as a willing collaborator: motivated by money, and a chance to get one over on her demanding mistresses, she's apparently content to betray her own sex to help Don Alfonso prove his point, and oils the wheels of his intricate mechanism of scheming and deception.

Stepping back even further, behind Don Alfonso and Despina are the figures of Mozart and Da Ponte, who bring this dramatic and musical conundrum to the stage, and employ Don Alfonso and Despina as their surrogates to slide the pieces around the chessboard. And, most importantly, it's Mozart and Da Ponte who also make their audiences down the centuries complicit, as both voyeurs and judges in this problematic game of deception and betrayal.

Changing tastes

You can probably see where this is going. For what else could make *Così fan tutte* such a fitting work for our own, voyeuristic times, where we encounter relationships being tested and trials being set daily on primetime television? We've become desensitised to them now, of course, but some of the activities we encounter in reality TV series or game shows would never have made it to the screen just a few decades back. But with relationships being initiated, cemented and blown apart, and identities dissected and judged in front of us every day in our living rooms, perhaps it's only fitting that we should apply similar perspectives to an age-old story. Furthermore, as reality TV participants become increasingly aware of the genre's mechanisms and conventions, so they increasingly become actors, performing rather than simply conveying their own personalities and lives, and thereby providing yet another parallel with *Così fan tutte's* many levels of artifice and acting.

Even if that's the case, however, where does it leave the opera's conclusion? Traditionally, the original couples get back together, and Don Alfonso warns them to learn from their experiences. But can anything really be the same after what they've been through? You might conclude that it's more a case of a return to acting, and either pretending that nothing has happened, or attempting to recreate the blinkered happiness of the opera's opening. Occasionally, directors have left the couples swapped at the opera's end – a more provocative conclusion, certainly, but one that still leaves many questions unanswered.

By the time they wrote *Così fan tutte*, Mozart and Da Ponte already had form in dealing with problematic subject matter. In their previous collaboration, *Don Giovanni*, they depicted what we'd probably now call a serial rapist as a mischievous womaniser – but crucially, they also provided a cathartic balance to his catalogue of crimes with his plunge into hell as the ultimate punishment. In *Don Giovanni*, there's a sense of symmetry and resolution. In *Così fan tutte*, however, there's nothing of the sort. We're left up in the air, reflecting on the ethics of what's happened in front of us, and our own complicity. Perhaps that's what makes it Mozart's most forward-looking, provocative opera – and yes, probably his most problematic.

David Kettle

Biographies

Margo Arsane Dorabella

French mezzo-soprano Margo Arsane is a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2020/21, and also a member of the Lyon Opera Studio. She studied at the CNSMD Lyon, Munich's University of Music and Performing Arts, London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and the National Opera Studio. Among her prizes and awards, she won first prize at the 2013 Mozarteum Sommerakademie Wettbewerb, Special Prize at the 2014 Marmande International Singing Competition, and Young Hope Prize at the 2013 Concours International de Chant, Clermont-Ferrand.

Scottish Opera appearance: *Opera Highlights* Autumn 2020.

Operatic engagements include: Child *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Lyon Opera); Smeraldina/Linette *The Love for Three Oranges* (Lorraine National Opera); Page of Herodias *Salome* (Paris Philharmonie); Zaida *Il turco in Italia*, Rosina *The Barber of Seville* (Scherzo Ensemble); Sesto (cover) *Julius Caesar* (Opera North); Climene/First Love *Les amants magnifiques* by Lully (Le Concert Spirituel); Cherubino *The Marriage of Figaro* (Dartington Festival); Mélisande (cover) *Pelléas and Mélisande* (Garsington Opera); Concepción *L'heure espagnole* (Festival Pentecôte en Berry).

Arthur Bruce Guglielmo

Scottish baritone Arthur Bruce is The Robertson Trust Emerging Artist 2020/21. He is a graduate of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland's Opera School, the Royal Northern College of Music, English National Opera's Opera Works programme and Scottish Opera's Connect Ensemble. He is a Britten-Pears Young Artist.

Scottish Opera appearances: Angus *The Narcissistic Fish*, *Amadeus & The Bard*, *Opera Highlights* Spring 2020 and Autumn 2020, Schaunard *La bohème*, Belcore *L'Elisir d'amore*.

Operatic engagements include: title role *Gianni Schicchi* (RCS Opera School); Papageno *The Magic Flute* (Berlin Opera Academy); Zurga *The Pearl Fishers* (Edinburgh Grand Opera); Guglielmo (London Young Sinfonia); Wolfram *Tannhäuser* (Edinburgh Players Opera Group); Sam *Trouble in Tahiti* (RCS Opera School); Prince Yamadori *Madama Butterfly* (Bowdon Festival Opera).

Charlie Drummond Fiordiligi

Born in Lincoln, Charlie Drummond studied at King's College London, the Opera School at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), and the National Opera Studio. She is also a Samling Young Artist, and was a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2019/20.

Scottish Opera appearances: *Opera Highlights* Autumn 2019, Dhia *Iris*, Belle *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Operatic engagements include: title role (cover) *Anna Bolena* (Longborough Festival Opera); Donna Anna *Don Giovanni* (British Youth Opera); Rosalinde *Die Fledermaus*, Fiordiligi, Countess *The Marriage of Figaro*, Mrs Julian Owen Wingrave, Eleonora *Prima la musica e poi le parole* by Salieri (RCS); Sofia *Il signor Bruschino* (Raucous Rossini); Serena Farage *The Secretary Turned CEO* by Danyal Dhondy – world premiere (Lucid Arts); Voice *Simoon* by Erik Chisholm – world premiere (Music Co-OPERative Scotland).

Roxana Haines Director

Theatre and opera director Roxana Haines is Staff Director at Scottish Opera, where her previous productions have included *Opera Highlights* Autumn 2019 and Spring 2020, *Fox-tot!*, *La bohème* and *The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken* (Scottish Opera Young Company), as well as Puccini's *Edgar* and Mascagni's *Silvano* and *Iris* as part of the *Opera in Concert* series. She was also Assistant Director to Sir David McVicar in Verdi's *Falstaff*. Roxana studied at Goldsmiths, University of London, and received an MA in Advanced Theatre Practice from London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. She has also trained in a wide range of art forms, specialising in devised theatre and also working with puppetry, physical theatre, movement and circus. As an assistant director she has worked with companies including the Royal Opera, Opera Holland Park and Garsington Opera, as well as with the Aix-en-Provence Festival. As a revival director, Roxana has worked throughout Europe with the European Network of Opera Academies, touring the children's show *La petite flûte enchantée* to Lisbon, Madrid and Luxembourg. With Scottish Opera she has been Assistant Director for *Tosca*, *Kátya Kabanová* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She also leads and facilitates workshops in music and drama, and has worked with the Scottish Opera Young Company Gateway for 14- to 17-year-olds.

Catriona Hewitson Despina

Catriona Hewitson is a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2020/21. Born in Edinburgh, she studied at the City of Edinburgh Music School, Manchester's Royal Northern College of Music and the Opera Studio of London's Royal College of Music. Among her awards, she won the 2018 Ferrier Loveday Song Prize. She is a Samling Artist and a Philip and Dorothy Green Young Artist 2018-20.

Scottish Opera appearances: Voice I *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, Adina, *L'Elisir d'amore*, *Opera Highlights* Autumn 2020.

Operatic engagements include: Cis *Albert Herring* (The Grange Festival); Donna *Rinaldo* (Glyndebourne Touring Opera); Elsbeth (cover) *Fantasio* by Offenbach (Garsington Festival Opera); Sophie (cover) *Werther* (English Touring Opera); Susanna *The Marriage of Figaro*, Tytania *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Edwige *Robinson Crusoe* by Offenbach (Royal College of Music).

Michael Mofidian Don Alfonso

Born in Glasgow, bass-baritone Michael Mofidian studied at the University of Cambridge and London's Royal Academy of Music, and was a 2018-20 Jette Parker Young Artist at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

Operatic engagements include: Narumov *The Queen of Spades*, Alcade *The Force of Destiny*, Angelotti *Tosca*, Zuniga *Carmen*, Minotauros *Phaedra*, Johann *Werther*, Bass I *Death in Venice*, Dr Grenvil *La traviata*, Judge/Chelsias *Susanna*, Deputy *Don Carlo* (Royal Opera House Covent Garden); Doctor *Pelléas and Mélisande*, Imperial Commissioner *Madama Butterfly* (Glyndebourne).

Shengzhi Ren Ferrando

Chinese tenor Shengzhi Ren is a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2020/21. He studied at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and at London's Royal Academy of Music and National Opera Studio. Among his prizes and awards, he won first prize in the 2016 International Singing Contest for Young People (Vocal) in Macau, first prize in the 2015 Golden Bell Awards, first prize in the 2010 National Singing Contest for Young People and Asian International Vocal Singing Contest (Hong Kong), and third prize and public award in the 2019 Neapolitan Masters Competition in Italy.

Scottish Opera appearances: *Opera Highlights* Autumn 2020, Nemorino *L'Elisir d'amore*

Among the operatic roles he has performed are Vaudémont *Iolanta*, Don José *Carmen*, Tamino *The Magic Flute*, Nemorino *L'elisir d'amore* and Borsa *Rigoletto*. He has also sung Prince in scenes from *Cinderella* (Opera North) and Rodolfo in scenes from *La bohème* (Welsh National Opera). Among his Royal Academy Opera Scenes performances are Belfiore *Il viaggio a Reims*, Fenton *Falstaff*, Ruggiero *La rondine*, Alfredo *La traviata* and Rodolfo *La bohème*.

Stuart Stratford Conductor

Stuart Stratford is Music Director of Scottish Opera. He studied conducting at the University of Cambridge with David Parry, and with Ilya Musin at the St Petersburg Conservatoire.

He joined Scottish Opera in 2015 as the Company's sixth Music Director, joining a distinguished succession that originated with the Company's founder, Sir Alexander Gibson.

For Scottish Opera, he has conducted productions of *Falstaff*, *L'Elisir d'amore*, *Così fan tutte*, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, *The Telephone*, *Tosca*, *Jenufa*, *Rusalka*, *Pelléas and Mélisande*, *La bohème*, *Greek*, *Flight*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Kátya Kabanová*, *Anthropocene* (world premiere), *Breaking the Waves* and the groundbreaking *Pagliacci* in 'Paisley Opera House'. He introduced the popular Sunday Series of lesser-known *Operas in Concert*, which has featured such titles as *L'amico Fritz*, *Le villi*, *Iolanta*, *Francesca da Rimini*, *Aleko*, *Edgar*, *Silvano* and *Iris*.

In the UK he has worked with Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Opera Holland Park, English National Opera, the Buxton Festival and Birmingham Opera, in repertoire ranging from Giovanni d'Arco to Satyagraha. He is known for his expertise in Russian and Czech music, and his passion for bringing opera to new audiences outside of a traditional theatre setting.

Jonathon Cole-Swinard Chorus Master

Conductor and pianist Jonathon Swinard is Chorus Master at Scottish Opera and Head of Music at Garsington Opera. He studied at the University of Oxford and London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama before beginning his career at Scottish Opera. He subsequently held the Alexander Gibson Choral Conducting Fellowship with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Chorus before spending two years as Solorepetitor and Kapellmeister at Nuremberg's State Theatre.

He has long been involved in the training of young singers. He spent six years on the Faculty of the Solti Accademia di Bel Canto and Lyric Opera Studio Weimar, and two years as the Artistic Director of the Scottish Opera Young Company, and he was Head of Music for the inaugural New Generation Festival in Florence. He is the Artistic Director of the Young Artists Programme at Garsington Opera and works regularly as a visiting vocal coach in the major UK music colleges.

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