

Milton Abbey 2018 – Artist Biographies

Andy Dickens

Andy Dickens is a freelance jazz trumpeter who plays swing, mainstream, Dixieland and New Orleans Jazz.

Andy's lively trumpet and flugelhorn playing evokes the warmth and exuberance of Mardi Gras New Orleans; the heat of Chicago clubland and the excitement of small-band New York swing.

A frequent guest at European jazz festivals, he has played with many English and American notables including Slim Gaillard; Ken Peplowski; Joe Darensbourg; Franz Jackson; Jason Marsalis; Humphrey Littleton; Terry Lightfoot; Judith Durham; Clark Tracey; Bruce Turner; Jools Holland; Duncan Lamont; David Newton; Pete King and Peter Ind.

His current list of musical associates includes Julian Marc Stringle; Adrian Cox; Pete Allen; Tim Husskisson; Trevor Whiting; Duncan Hempstock; Emily Dickens; Al Nichols; Simon Picton; Graham Hughes; Bobby Worth; Martin Litton and Craig Milverton.

Often featured as a guest musician with other bands his own concerts are punctuated with song and off-beat observations, and his typically wry presentation results in a programme that is entertaining and draws from the finest traditions in jazz.

Rachel Podger

Baroque violin/director

"There is probably no more inspirational musician working today than Podger"

(Gramophone). Rachel Podger, *"the queen of the baroque violin"* (Sunday Times), has established herself as a leading interpreter of the Baroque and Classical. She was the first woman to be awarded the prestigious Royal Academy of Music/Kohn Foundation Bach Prize in October 2015. A creative programmer she is the founder and Artistic Director of Brecon Baroque Festival and her ensemble Brecon Baroque.

A significant birthday year for Rachel, 2018 holds an exciting and innovative new collaboration, *A Guardian Angel*, with world-renowned vocal ensemble VOCES8. Inspired by her BBC Music Magazine Award winning disc and including Biber's *Passacaglia* of the same name, Podger's serene and beguiling virtuosity is the guiding voice in *Guardian Angel* amidst choral masterpieces sung by the 'impeccable' (Gramophone) VOCES8. Including a new commission by upcoming composer Owain Park and works by VOCES8 composer in residence Jonathan Dove and Sir James MacMillan. Further treats include recitals across the world (including her solo debut in Japan), a concert and recording collaboration with Kristian Bezuidenhout, concertos with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, BBC NOW and Västerås Sinfonietta, further tours of *A Guardian Angel* with VOCES8 and Vivaldi *Four Seasons* with Brecon Baroque, performances of the Mozart concertos in 2019 and the Beethoven Sonatas in 2020.

As a director and soloist, Rachel has enjoyed countless collaborations with highlights including Robert Levin, Jordi Savall, Masaaki Suzuki, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Robert Hollingworth & I Fagiolini, European Union Baroque Orchestra, English Concert, The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, The Academy of Ancient Music, Holland Baroque Society, Tafelmusik (Toronto), and within the USA the Berwick Academy, the Handel and

Haydn Society, Berkeley Early Music, Oregon Bach Festival, and Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra.

Rachel has won numerous awards including two Baroque Instrumental Gramophone Awards for *La Stravaganza* (2003) and Biber *Rosary Sonatas* (2016), the Diapason d'Or de l'année in the Baroque Ensemble category for her recording of the *La Cetra* Vivaldi concertos (2012), two BBC Music Magazine awards in the instrumental category for *Guardian Angel* (2014) and the concerto category for the complete Vivaldi *L'Estro Armonico* concertos (2016). Upcoming releases for 2018 include Vivaldi's *Le Quattro Stagioni* with Brecon Baroque and solo Bach *Cello Suites* transposed for the violin.

A dedicated educator, she holds an honorary position at both the Royal Academy of Music, where she holds the Micaela Comberti Chair for Baroque Violin (founded in 2008), and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama where she holds the Jane Hodge Foundation International Chair in Baroque Violin. Rachel has a developing relationship with The Juilliard School in New York. Rachel Podger is managed worldwide by Percius. www.percius.co.uk

'Inspirational originality elicits inspirational playing'
BBC Music Magazine, Record of the Month
www.rachelpodger.com

Robert Hollingworth

Director

Robert Hollingworth is passionate about Renaissance and 20th/21st century music and renowned for creating ground-breaking projects which present music to audiences in innovative ways.

He founded I Fagiolini in 1986; with them he has presented signature projects including *Simunye*, *The Full Monteverdi*, *Tallis in Wonderland*, *How Like An Angel* (with Australian contemporary circus group CIRCA), and *Betrayal: a polyphonic crime drama*. Under Hollingworth's expert direction, I Fagiolini has gone on to win the Royal Philharmonic Society's Ensemble Award, Gramophone Awards and the Diapason D'Or de l'Annee. In 2017 the group returned to the BBC Proms and gave their debut at the Edinburgh International Festival. Recent releases on DECCA Classics include the multi-award winning *Striggio Mass in 40 Parts*, *Amuse-Bouche*, *Martin Peerson - Grave Chamber Music* and most recently *Monteverdi: The Other Vespers*.

Hollingworth has directed the English Concert, Academy of Ancient Music and the BBC Concert Orchestra; and some of the world's finest chamber choirs including: Accentus, NDR Chor, the National Chamber Choir of Ireland and BBC Singers. In 2018 he works with RIAS Kammerchor, Capella Cracoviensis in Poland and VOCES8.

He has also worked on a number of films and regularly writes and presents programmes for BBC Radio 3. He is Reader in Music at the University of York and directs University Chamber Choir 'The 24'.

Robert Hollingworth is managed worldwide by Percius. www.percius.co.uk

Neil Valentine

Neil studied at York University and Trinity College of music and was a member of Southbank Sinfonia. Now he is an Associate Musician of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra Ensembles Manager at University of Winchester. He works in all areas of the community including people suffering from dementia. The music and dementia project he leads 'Music for a While' was shortlisted for the Arts & Health Award at the 2017 RSPH Health and Wellbeing Awards.

VOCES8

The British vocal ensemble VOCES8 is proud to inspire people through music and share the joy of singing. Touring extensively throughout Europe, North America and Asia, the group performs repertoire from Renaissance polyphony to contemporary commissions and arrangements; versatility and a celebration of diverse musical expression is central to the ensemble's performance ethos.

VOCES8 has performed at venues such as the Wigmore Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Royal Albert Hall, Bridgewater Hall Manchester, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Cité de la Musique Paris, Vienna Konzerthaus, Tokyo Opera City, National Centre for the Performing Arts Beijing, Shanghai Concert Hall and Mariinsky Theatre Concert Hall. Artistic collaborators have included the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, period ensembles Florilegium, L'Arpeggiata and La Folia Barockorchester, and violinist/artistic director Hugo Ticcianti. This season they will perform with baroque violinist Rachel Podger with a new innovative project called **Guardian Angel**. In the 2017/18 Season the ensemble will be touring Europe extensively, returning to Russia, and making three tours to the USA; they will also make debut tours to Singapore and Mexico.

With an on-going programme of recordings and live broadcasts, VOCES8 is heard regularly on international television and radio. The ensemble is a Decca Classics artist and has released acclaimed recordings that have been at the top of the classical charts. VOCES8 has premiered commissions from Roxanna Panufnik, Alexander Levine, Alec Roth, Ben Parry, Ola Gjeilo, Philip Stopford and Thomas Hewitt Jones. The group also performs bespoke arrangements written by Arranger in Residence, Jim Clements.

The ensemble welcomed one of the most celebrated contemporary composers, Jonathan Dove, as Composer in Residence for two seasons from September 2017. As well as a commission planned for 2019 (Jonathan's 60th birthday year), the associateship will provide mentoring opportunities to emerging composers linked with the group's education programme.

VOCES8 is passionate about music education and is the flagship ensemble of the music charity VCM Foundation. Engaging in a broad range of outreach work that reaches up to 40,000 people a year, the group also runs an annual programme of workshops and masterclasses at the Foundation's home in London, the Gresham Centre at St Anne & St Agnes Church. The ensemble is dedicated to supporting promising young singers and awards eight annual choral scholarships through the VOCES8 Scholars initiative. These scholarships are linked to the annual Milton Abbey Summer School at which amateur singers of all ages are invited to work and perform with VOCES8. International education partnerships include Bozar Brussels, Paris Philharmonie, Vienna Konzerthaus and Heidelberg Frühling.

As official Ambassadors for Edition Peters, the ensemble has published a collection of Songbooks and educational material including the VOCES8 Method. Developed by Paul Smith, Co-Founder of VOCES8, this unique teaching tool is available in four languages and adopts music to enhance development in numeracy, literacy and linguistics.

VOCES8 is very grateful for support from Arts Council England, the Merchant Taylors' Company, the Worshipful Company of Plaisterers, Holman Fenwick Willan and T.M.Lewin.

"The slickest of the lot... fans of a cappella ought to hear this."

CD Review, BBC Radio 3

"Eight beautifully integrated solo voices... Every number here has something particularly arresting within it, all supported by persuasive and committed singing."

BBC Music Magazine Choral and Song Choice, A Purcell Collection

Barnaby Smith

Barnaby Smith is Artistic Director of the internationally renowned vocal ensemble, VOCES8 and as such is in demand as a conductor, choir trainer, countertenor and arranger. Barnaby completed his studies in Specialist Early Music Performance at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis where he was a pupil of Andreas Scholl and René Jacobs. Barnaby is also an alumnus of the Britten-Pears Young Artists Programme.

With a schedule that takes him around the world, recent highlights include performances at the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Barbican Centre, Wigmore Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Konzerthaus in Vienna, Tokyo Opera City, Utrecht Early Music Festival and residencies at the St Andrew's Voices Festival and St Magnus Festival. Repertoire highlights include Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, Handel: Dixit Dominus and Coronation Anthems, Bach: Magnificat in D, Mozart: Requiem and Symphony no. 40, Vaughan-Williams: Five Mystical Songs, Dove: The Passing of the Year and new commissions by Ola Gjeilo. Barnaby's collaborations include Rachel Podger, Jonathan Dove, Jacob Collier, Academy of Ancient Music, London Philharmonic Orchestra (Handel: Concerto Grossi, Purcell: Choral Odes and Britten: Choral Odes), Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra (Bach: Christmas Oratorio and Handel: Messiah) and he directed the music for the Olympic Mascots Film Scores at Abbey Road Studios with the British Film Orchestra. Barnaby is also Artistic Director of the Milton Abbey International Music Festival. As a soloist Barnaby has also worked under the baton of conductors including Paul McCreesh and Masaaki Suzuki. On disc Barnaby has released commercially on Decca Classics, Universal, Sony, Naxos, Signum Classics and VCM Records. He has four no.1 selling albums on the Decca Classics and VCM Records labels, was delighted to receive the award for Album of the Year 2015 from Classic FM, was voted Choral Disc Choice Award by BBC Music Magazine in June 2014 and has won 7 Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards.

Paul Smith

Paul Smith is an innovative and creative performer, an inspirational educator and an empowering public speaker. As co-founder of VOCES8, author of The VOCES8 Method and CEO of the VCM Foundation, he has enjoyed more than a decade of work including global travel to prestigious concert venues, schools and universities.

Paul is passionate about the impact singing and the arts can have in the widest possible context – from academic improvement to social skills and building more cohesive communities. He uses that passion to design and deliver unique, inclusive and uplifting performance projects. In the 2017-18 season, Paul will be leading the ‘Singing Brussels’ massed choir project with BOZAR in Brussels, an outreach programme with the Vienna Konzerthaus, a community programme with the Curtis Institute, a massed singing event at Heidelberg Frühling and projects in London, across France, Germany, the USA and in Tokyo. The VOCES8 Method, written by Paul, is published by Edition Peters in four languages, and is now being used in thousands of schools in nine countries. The Method is designed to link specific music-making activities with academic improvement in numeracy, literacy and linguistics. In 2017 Paul published ‘Pas de Deux’ a new composition for choir with audience participation, and his new work ‘A New World’ will be premiered in 2018 in concerts across Europe.

Since its inception in 2007 the VCM Foundation has worked with 300,000 young people. Projects have included massed singing performances at the Royal Opera House (London), Cité de la Musique (Paris) and La Folle Journée (Nantes); and with “singing city” projects in cities such as Torino, Wrocław, Lyon, Hannover, Houston, Albuquerque, Dallas/Fort Worth, Bermuda, Nairobi, Lagos, Dubai, Tokyo, and Taipei. Working in partnership with the Diocese of London, Paul has spearheaded the creation of a home for the VCM Foundation at the Gresham Centre, a centre of excellence in vocal music performance, education and outreach in the heart of the City of London. He also regularly works with Apollo5, rising a cappella vocalists and also part of the VCM Foundation.

As an educator and public speaker, Paul has given speeches and created sessions on music and leadership, teamwork, music and creativity, health and wellbeing, and The VOCES8 Method. In 2014 he gave a TEDx talk entitled “How can we use music to help us learn?”. Engagements at international conferences include the ACDA National and Regional conventions; Europa Cantat; the London Music Education Expo at the Barbican; Chor.com, Germany; the World Symposium of Singing in Budapest at the Liszt Music Academy; Singing Cities at BOZAR in Brussels; and at the Royal College of Music in London.

Paul has been singing for nearly 25 years, first as a boy chorister with the choir of Westminster Abbey, and, since 2005 with the group he co-founded with his brother, VOCES8. As a recording artist with Decca Classics, Paul has featured on best-selling, chart-topping albums and won a host of international awards.

Paul is delighted to be an ambassador for Edition Peters, as well as a board member of the 21st Century Musician programme at DePauw University, Indiana, and a trustee for the National Children’s Choir of Great Britain.