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Kobbé's Opera Book

Eugene Onegin

Piotr Tchaikovsky

Opera in three acts Sung in English

1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th November 2005

7.15pm The Crescent Theatre

MD - Phil Ypres-Smith
Director - Sue Marshall

Featuring a **Birmingham Conservatoire** orchestra
as part of a funded outreach project
and dancers from **Elmhurst** School of dance



Midland Music Makers
Opera

www.midlandmusicmakers.org

Eugene Onegin

Music by Tchaikovsky

Original Libretto by Konstantin Shilovsky English translation by David Lloyd-Jones

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CHARACTERS

Eugene Onegin	<i>A City Gentleman</i>	Fran Ambrose
Tatyana	<i>A young country girl</i>	Kym Sheargold
Lensky	<i>Olga's fiancée</i>	Mark Ellse
Olga	<i>Tatyana's younger sister</i>	Claire Stoneman
Madame Larina	<i>Tatyana and Olga's mother who owns an estate</i> Wednesday & Friday	Patricia Bullock
	Tuesday & Saturday	Sheila Giles
Filipyevna	<i>Tatyana and Olga's nurse</i>	Patricia Nixon
Monsieur Triquet	<i>A Frenchman</i>	Roger Hanke
Prince Gremin	<i>Tatyana's husband, a retired general</i>	John Reading
Zaretsky	<i>Friend of Lensky</i>	David Mellor
Captain Petrovich	<i>Party Guest</i>	David Sandells
Guillot	<i>Onegin's second</i>	Graham Brookman

~ CHORUS LADIES ~

Gwyneth Bowdler, Patricia Bullock, Susan Cash, Margaret Clewett, Pam Davies,
Claire Harvey-East, Sheila Giles, Josephine Holway, Norma Johnson, Valerie
Matthews, Alison Paris, Karen Perrey, Helen Rourke, Stella Rourke, Emma Skinner,
Janet Stanley, Dee White, Charlotte Woffindin, Marrian Yates.

~ CHORUS GENTLEMEN ~

Graham Brookman, Tony Clewett, Roger Hanke, Barry Matthews, Willem Meijs,
David Mellor, Tim Morris, Malcolm Oakes, John Reading, David Sandells.

~ YOUNG PEOPLE of ELMFIELD SCHOOL ~

Michael Bresnahan, Lily Bunting, Tessa Cole, Rosa Gerhards, Anna Hobson,
Anna Murray, Josh Wilkes, Jenny Whittaker.

~ ORCHESTRA of THE BIRMINGHAM CONSERVATOIRE ~



Leader of the Orchestra - Ed Harris.

Our grateful thanks to the 26 Conservatoire players who
have worked so hard on this production.

~ DANCERS of ELMHURST SCHOOL ~



Oliver Adams, Becky Emmott, Carlie Milner,
Donna Mitchell, Josh Ryder, Silas Stubbs,
Casmine Wilde, Jacob Youngson.

SYNOPSIS

Act One

The home of Madame Larina, 19th Century Russia.

Madame Larina lives in the country with her two daughters Tatyana and Olga and their nurse. One morning, while Tatyana and Olga sing of loves to come, Madame Larina and their nurse, Filipyevna, talk about old times and the loves they have lost. Peasants return wearily from their work and give thanks for the end of harvest to their Ladyship, Madame Larina. Refreshed, they dance and sing folk songs.

Olga, a flighty girl, is engaged to the romantic Lensky and cordially welcomes Lensky's new friend and neighbour, Eugene Onegin, to the family home. Onegin is bored in the country but as he and Tatyana talk together the innocent Tatyana falls in love with him, believing him to be the man of whom she has always dreamed .

Tatyana retires to her room, where Filipyevna entertains her with tales of her early life. Unable to concentrate on anything but Onegin, she dismisses Filipyevna and begins to pen a letter to Onegin. With longing, yet with fear she expresses her deepest feelings on the paper. In the end, she seals the life-changing letter and in the morning she persuades a worried Filipyevna to ask her grandson to deliver it to Onegin

In the orchard, later that morning

During a gathering of dancing peasant girls, Onegin visits Madame Larina's home again, and this time cruelly rejects Tatyana, believing her to be below his station, and knowing he could never be true to her. Tatyana is broken hearted.

20 minute INTERVAL



Act Two

At a party held in honour of Tatyana

The widow, Larina, gives a party for her daughter, to which all the local gentry are invited, including Onegin. Bored again, he toys with Olga for company, who is flattered and enjoys the attention. She ignores Lensky's pleas to stop. The guests are delighted as Triquet, a French gentleman, consents to sing a song which he dedicates to Tatyana. During the dancing, Lensky's jealousy destroys the convivial atmosphere, and to the horror of Madame Larina and the gathered guests, he finally challenges Onegin to a duel.

In a field, early next morning,

Lensky and his second, Zaretsky, prepare for the duel. Lensky sings a melancholic aria by way of a farewell to a once happy life, his one regret being the loss of Olga. Onegin arrives late, hurriedly offering his servant, Guillot, as his second and, as they steel themselves for the duel, they sing of their sadness at the hopelessness of the situation.

Distraught, Onegin kills his dear friend, as his honour and duty dictate.

5 minute Pause

Act Three

A palace in St Petersburg - two years later

At a ball in the palace of Prince Gremin, Onegin sees Tatyana again. Against a backdrop of high society dance he cannot believe the transformation in her. She is now married to the Prince, and his feelings toward her are stirred into life. He regrets having passed her by so cruelly, and longs for a reconciliation. Prince Gremin sings to his guests of his love for dear Tatyana, but this does not dampen Onegin's selfish thoughts. He asks her to meet him later.

When they are finally alone, it is Onegin who is struck down with desire, and Tatyana who tries to keep her distance. Despite stirrings of feeling for him, she reminds him of how deeply she has been hurt. Undeterred, he pleads with her, and momentarily they sing of what could have been. Tatyana knows that it could never be what she had hoped for, and how much she loves her husband the Prince. She asks Onegin to remember his path of honour and relinquish his feelings for her. She then finds her strength and leaves Onegin devastated and hopeless.

CURTAIN

Based on Pushkin's story, 'Eugene Onegin' is an interesting comment upon status, love, and honour. Tchaikovsky's music, with echoes of so many of his major works, beautifully expresses the dark and the light of this dramatic piece.

FRAN AMBROSE (Eugene Onegin)

Fran Ambrose started his singing career at the age of 8 as a cathedral chorister in Ely finishing as Head Chorister in his final year. Whilst studying biochemistry at UCL he was a choral scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields church on Trafalgar Square and a member of the UCL Opera company performing the role of *Jarno* in 'Mignon' by Ambroise Thomas. After leaving London for Cambridge he sang in Girton College Choir where he met his wife Anna. Now living in Lichfield, Fran is one of the Lay Vicars Choral in Lichfield Cathedral a job which he combines with working as a database developer for a Cambridge based company, Opportunity Links. He has recently enjoyed playing the role of *Don Alfonso* in a Voicebox production of 'Cosi Fan Tutti'.

PAT BULLOCK (Madame Larina, Wednesday & Friday)

As a child, in addition to singing and playing the piano, Pat played the violin in the Staffordshire Youth Orchestra. After qualifying as a clinical chemist, she studied ballet for ten years before returning to singing. Since then she has become a primary teacher and was awarded a Diploma of Higher Education in Music from Birmingham University. Having gained a wide experience of choral singing including solo work, she joined Midland Music Makers five years ago. Since then has taken the roles of *Mrs Nolan* in 'The Medium' and *Annius* in last year's 'La Clemenza Di Tito'. The rôle of the mother, *Madame Larina*, in this production will be her third for the company.

MARK ELLSE (Lensky)

Mark Ellse held a choral scholarship at Jesus College, Cambridge at the same time as reading for his physics degree. Moving to London broadened his experience as a professional tenor, with oratorio his speciality. His repertoire ranging Beethoven 9 and Verdi's Requiem to smaller scale works such as Britten's St Nicholas. He has made radio and television broadcasts, including a Christmas day special with Kiri te Kanawa. His operatic repertoire includes the title roles in Mozart's 'Idomeneo' and 'Peter Grimes', *Percy* in Donizetti's 'Anna Bolena' and recently *Don Jose* in 'Carmen' for Leamington Spa Opera, the title role of *Hoffmann* for RSO's 'The Tales of Hoffmann' and *Ferrando* in 'Cosi fan tutte' for Voicebox. As a physics teacher he is author and editor of numerous text books. For the last ten years he has been Principal of Chase Academy in Cannock.

SHEILA GILES (Madame Larina Tuesday, Saturday)

Sheila began singing at an early age and was talented enough to win the 'Llangollen International Singing Festival' early in her singing career. She has performed with Midland Music Makers for many years, having sung some significant Contralto rôles during that time, including 'Gianni Scicchi' and *Miriam* in 'Moses'. Sheila is active on the oratorio circuit, and sang the contralto part in Ludlow Festival's 'Verdi Requiem'. She sings with The Midlands Chorale and The Manor Operatic Society, for whom she sang the *Gypsy Queen* in their 'Gypsy Baron' last year. Sheila has recently organised and sung in a charity concert raising a substantial amount for the Kidney Patients Association.

ROGER HANKE (Monsieur Triquet)

Roger's first stage rôle was *Luiz*, at 16, in Gilbert & Sullivan's 'Gondoliers'. He still has a strong interest in the Savoy Operas and has performed most of the major tenor roles and 'patter' parts. At University Roger sang in a motet choir and developed an interest in early music. After qualifying as a dentist he studied singing at the Birmingham Conservatoire. Roger has undertaken many principal oratorio parts, sang *Acis* in Handel's 'Acis and Galatea', and the title role in Carissimi's 'Jephthe'. Recent productions include *Gerald* in 'Me & My Girl', *The Defendant* in 'Trial By Jury', *The Pirate King* in 'Pirates of Penzance', *Nicely-Nicely Johnson* in 'Guys & Dolls', *Koko* in 'The Mikado' and *Alfred* in 'Die Fledermaus'. His next rôle is Nanki-Poo in The Mikado, alongside members of the old D'Oyly Carte Opera Company.

SUE MARSHALL (Artistic Director)

Sue won a scholarship to study Drama at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where she had also attended the Guildhall Junior School as a music student. She has been a performer and assistant director in professional theatre, and has also worked for BBC TV and Radio Four Saturday afternoon theatre. She has taught in a wide range of schools, including Hurst Lodge Theatre School and Mountview Theatre School in London. Sue has also worked for NODA where she directed various Musicals for amateur operatic companies. Sue now teaches at Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School in Stourbridge. This is her first production with MMM.

DAVID MELLOR (Zaretsky)

David's operatic career began with Royal Sutton Opera in 1981. He has sung in every MMM production since 1985. Solo roles include *Betto* in 'Gianni Schicchi', *Micha* and *Krusina* in 'The Bartered Bride', *Balthazar* in 'Amahl', *Zuane* in 'La Gioconda', *Jobard* in 'Aunt Caroline's Will' and *Mr. Gobineau* in 'The Medium'. Rôles for RSO include *Zuniga* in 'Carmen', the *High Priest of Baal* in 'Nabucco', *Simone* in 'Gianni Schicchi', *Monterone* in 'Rigoletto', the *Marquis of Calatrava* in 'The Force of Destiny', *Zaretsky* in 'Eugene Onegin', the *Mandarin* in 'Turandot' and the *Imperial Commissioner* in 'Madam Butterfly'. He sang in three productions of 'La Traviata' within eighteen months; as *Dr. Grenvil* for English Touring Opera Summer School and MMM, and as the *Marquis D'Obigny* for RSO. Last year David played *Publius* in 'La Clemenza Di Tito'.

PATRICIA NIXON LLAM (Filipyevna)

Pat has been a member of MMM for many years. Her first leading rôle with the society was *Messenger of Peace* in Wagner's 'Rienzi'. Following that, Pat performed numerous leading soprano rôles, including the *Fairy Queen* in 'Die Feen', Wagner's second opera. She has found every rôle extremely rewarding, but most memorable were the title rôle in 'Aida', *Lady M* in the Scottish Play and, of course, the title rôle in 'Turandot'. In recent years, Pat has sung the chilling rôle of *Baba (Madame Flora)* in MMM's 'The Medium'. She has also produced operas for MMM and other local societies and is currently an Assessor for the English Speaking Board. Pat also teaches singing.

JOHN READING (Prince Gremin)

John has sung many rôles in MMM productions and for other Operatic groups. His last rôle for MMM was *Foreman of the jury* in 2003's 'Trial by Jury', following *Micha* in 'The Bartered Bride'. He has also taken various rôles in Cincinnati Theatre Company productions, including the *Lion* in 'The Wizard of Oz', *Canon Chasuble* in 'The Importance of Being Earnest' and *Colonel Von Strohm* in 'Allo Allo'.

DAVID SANDELLS (Captain Petrovich)

David hails from Stroud where as a child he learned piano and trombone, later touring with the Gloucestershire Youth Orchestra and Gloucestershire Youth Jazz Orchestra. At University David played in several bands and sang in the jazz choir. David enjoys jazz, but recently took to choral singing, first in the CBSO come-and-sing event, then with 'Notorious'. David joined MMM last year for 'La Clemenza Di Tito', and the rôle of *Captain Petrovich* is his first for MMM. David currently works as an aerospace engineer for Airbus, and recently moved to Bristol.

KYM SHEARGOLD (Tatyana)

Kym Sheargold was born in Birmingham and studied at Birmingham Conservatoire, gaining a Masters Degree in Music Performance. She has appeared in many operas as a professional and semi-professional singer, including 'Don Giovanni', 'Macbeth', 'Tales of Hoffman' and 'Carmen'. Kym is also a recital singer, specialising in twentieth-century music, and has premiered a number of contemporary works. She has sung on radio and TV. For Music Makers she has performed the rôles of *The Plaintiff* in 'Trial by Jury', *Mrs Gobineau* in 'The Medium' and *Vitellia* in last year's 'La Clemenza Di Tito'. Kym recently performed the rôle of *Fiodiligi* in Mozart's 'Cosi Fan Tutti' for Voicebox and she currently studies with international performer Nicholas Clapton.

CLAIRE STONEMAN (Olga)

Claire Stoneman was born in Birmingham. Whilst studying at the University of Leeds she made her operatic debut at 18 as the *Third Lady* in Mozart's 'The Magic Flute'. Claire has since performed *The Sorceress* in 'Dido and Aeneas', *Cherubino* in 'The Marriage of Figaro', *Mrs Grose* in 'The Turn of the Screw', *The Sandman* in 'Hansel and Gretel' and she made her London debut as *Hansel* in 'Hansel and Gretel' at the Purcell Room in 2001. Claire recently played *Mrs Kneebone* in Opera Anywhere's production of 'A Dinner Engagement' and *Dorabella* in Voicebox's 'Cosi Fan Tutte'. Future plans include an Amnesty International Opera Gala with mezzo Rebecca de Pont Davies and the Trans-Opera Orchestra at St. James's Church, Piccadilly in late November. Claire studies singing with renowned tenor, Anthony Roden. *Olga* is Claire's second operatic rôle with Midland Music Makers after her debut as *Sextus* in last year's 'La Clemenza di Tito'.

MIKHAIL TCHOUPAKOV (Choreographer)

Born and raised in Moscow, Mikhail graduated from the Bolshoi Ballet Academy. He danced with the renowned Bolshoi Ballet for eight years, performing the full repertory, including soloist parts in *Nutcracker*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Spartacus*, *Swan Lake*, *Sketches*, *Raymonda*, *Don Quixote*, *Golden Age*, and many others. With the Bolshoi, Mikhail toured Brazil, Australia, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Italy, France, Morocco, India, Japan, China, and the United States. He is a graduate of the Moscow State Choreography Institute where he received his M.F.A. in Dance Pedagogy and Choreography. Since 1990, Mikhail has coached and performed all over the world. He taught at the Royal Ballet School in London and is now on the faculty of the Birmingham Royal Ballet's official school, the Elmhurst School for Dance in Birmingham. Mikhail is an official representative and appointed trustee of the Kasyan Goleizovsky Foundation.

PHIL YPRES-SMITH (Musical Director)

Phil Ypres-Smith began his musical career studying organ and singing at Birmingham School of Music, where he worked closely with the vocal department as an accompanist. He was also a student at the Opera School and, in following years, was invited to return as a visiting lecturer, coach, répétiteur and Musical Director. His Musical Direction for the Opera School has included 'Don Giovanni', 'Alcina', 'Albert Herring' and many Workshop productions. Phil is an active singer with a fine Counter Tenor voice. He is also a singing teacher and vocal coach and an active composer, having a number of first performances performed regionally. He has been MD for three MMM productions. Phil has sung and accompanied for radio and - over the years - has led many musical and choral groups. He is also Director of Music at St. George's church, Edgbaston and, as the founder MD of Voicebox Productions, he recently toured the region with *Cosi Fan Tutte*.



Midland Music Makers

OPERA COMPANY

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Thank you for supporting Midland Music Makers

It's good to be back at the Crescent again, after a busy programme of Christmas, Spring and Summer concerts around the West Midlands, the highlight of which was Rossini's 'Petite Messe Solennelle' which was enjoyed immensely by the company and well received by the audiences.

Birmingham's ArtFest is an impressive event. This year was our second. Our soloists performed to appreciative audiences at the CBSO Centre and the Flapper and Firkin and the whole company entertained a sizeable crowd in Brindley Place. Our stall was manned throughout the weekend and, as last year, we have recruited singers who intend to join us for our next production. Our novel experience for the year was to appear on the local rock station KERRANG!

As can be seen by the following dates, we're ending the year with a number of concerts, and the plans for our 60th anniversary in 2006 mean that we look to the future with great confidence.

Midland Music Makers
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2005 End-of-year concerts

November 10th 2005

*Concert version of Eugene Onegin
at St. Thomas' Church, Stourbridge.*

November 27th 2005

*Come-and-Sing Messiah
Part One, Hallelulia and Amen.
5pm St. George's Church, Edgbaston.*

December 3rd

*Christmas concert
Lichfield Methodist Church*

December 27th 2005

*Opera Gala at Symphony Hall
with Birmingham Choral Union*

MMM 2006 Programme

Spring/Summer concerts

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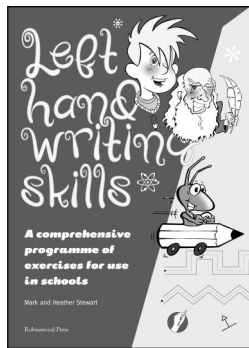
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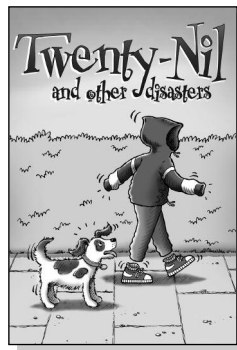
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Artistic Director Sue Marshall
Choreography Mikhail Tchoupakov and Sue Marshall
Production and stage co-ordination Barry Matthews
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Stage Manager Kevin McGrath
Set Construction Barry Matthews and Malcolm Oakes
Lighting Richard Pardoe-Williams
Costume Co-ordinator Pam Davies
Props Susan Cash
Stage Crew Edward Alford, Terry Deering, Susie Oakes, Paul Taylor,
Rob Taylor, Clive Thursfield, Jaz Woodcock-Stewart

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