

THE ROYAL OPERA PRESENTS:

THE WATCHERS IN THE WINGS

Four-minute opera by the Royal Opera House Youth Opera Company

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxoKgzxwo6s>

The Royal Opera is proud to present *The Watchers in the Wings*, a newly commissioned four-minute opera by successful children's author **Steven Butler** (*The Diary of Dennis the Menace*) and award-winning composer **John Barber**.

Kasper Holten, Director of Opera for The Royal Opera, comments: 'This has been a fantastic collaboration for us, working with new friends in the music video industry on a brand new opera for young people. It's really important for us to find new ways of introducing opera to another generation.'

The digital opera short is produced by award-winning video production company **Kode Media**, who have previously created music videos for Sam Smith (*Stay With Me*), Mumford and Sons (*Whispers in the Dark*), Coldplay (*The Scientist*) and Mark Ronson (*I Can't Lose*). The opera stars 47 children from the Royal Opera House's **Youth Opera Company** aged between 9 and 13 years of age, performing alongside British tenor **Paul Curievici**.

Filmed on location at the Royal Opera House, *The Watchers in the Wings* tells the story of a group of schoolchildren who find themselves whisked away on an adventure through the building, with a little help from a mysterious and enigmatic Tour Guide.

This commission aims to introduce younger audiences to the sound world of opera, and to showcase the versatility of the art form through a vibrant performance on a digital platform.

The video can be viewed at the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxoKgzxwo6s>

Creative team:

Composer: John Barber

Librettist: Steven Butler

Director: Karen Gillingham

Film Director: Niall Coffey

Designer: Rhiannon Newman Brown

Conductor: Jessica Cottis

Vocal Director: Suzi Zumpe

Tour Guide: Paul Curievici

Schoolchildren and Ghosts: Royal Opera House Youth Opera Company

Ensemble: Instrumentalists from Southbank Sinfonia

Production Company: Kode Media

Notes to editors:

The Royal Opera House's Youth Opera Company is a 50-strong group of diverse, talented children aged 9 to 13 years old. Members come from across Greater London and from a wide variety of backgrounds. What they have in common is real potential as singers and actors; potential that they discover and develop through being part of the Company. They generally meet once a fortnight at the Royal Opera House, for a full day of workshops and rehearsals.

Youth Opera Company was established in 2010, following an extensive series of workshops involving more than 400 children; they had discovered a passion for singing through school projects run by the Royal Opera House and other

organizations with a commitment to learning and participation. The aim remains to keep our recruitment base as broad as possible and to give opportunities to everyone, irrespective of whether they have previous experience of opera or not.

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