



Neil Balfour

BARITONE

BIOGRAPHY

Indian-Scottish Neil Balfour is an award-winning British Baritone and Voiceover Artist. He started musical life as a pianist, punk-rocker and conductor, graduating from Leeds College of Music, the Royal Northern College of Music and the National Opera Studio, before falling in love with all-things-voice to tell stories. A former Britten-Pears, Samling, Momentum and Concordia artist, he has performed at the Glastonbury Festival and is the first to beatbox in an opera at Longborough Festival Opera.

In the upcoming season engagements include **Jacob** *Displaced* (world premiere) for CoAlign; **Bartley** *Riders to the Sea* for OperaUpClose; Handel's *Israel in Egypt* for the Yorkshire Philharmonic Choir; **Mr. Noye** *Noye's Fludde*; *Love is a Spectrum* (a recital celebrating neuro-divergence) for Thaxted Festival; and the premiere of *Untold Lives* (a new song cycle about Indian Soldiers in WWI created by Neil Balfour and Cheryl Frances-Hoad) for Oxford International Song Festival.

Highlights in recent seasons include his American debut as **Father** *Thumbprint* for Portland Opera; **Prince Yamadori** *Madama Butterfly* and *The Shoemaker* (world premiere) for Welsh National Opera; *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (world premiere) for the London Symphony Orchestra; **Jean Arp** *Sophie* (world premiere) for Tête à Tête; a recital with Roderick Williams for Thaxted Festival and recitals on Schumann and Sondheim for Oxford International Song Festival.

Operatic performances include **Maslenitsa** *The Snowmaiden* (English Touring Opera); **Colline** *La bohème* (Mananan Opera & OFMAN Madrid Opera Studio); **Mercurio** *La Calisto* (Longborough Festival Opera); **Don Alfonso** *Così fan tutte*, **Quince** *A midsummer night's dream* and **Lord Ellington** *La vie Parisienne* (RNCM); **Eustache** *The Six of Calais* (Pegasus Opera); **Diktator** *Der Diktator* and **Guillermo Kahlo** *Frida* (Northern Opera Group); **Dottore Grenvil** *La Traviata* (Devon Opera); **Cold Genius** *King Arthur* (Glastonbury Festival); **Broadcaster** *The Flying Dutchman* (OperaUpClose); **Young Artist** *Macbeth* (Buxton International Festival) and the nationwide tours of *Aida* and *Fidelio* (Chorus of Opera North). He has also understudied **Figaro** *Le nozze di Figaro* (Longborough Festival Opera).

Contemporary opera roles created for Neil include **Ibn Al-Haytham** *Al-Haytham's light* and **Texy/ Everywhere** *Back into the world* (English Touring Opera); **Jacob** *Displaced* (CoAlign); **Jean Arp** *Sophie* (Tête à Tête Opera festival); **Father** *Mysterious 44* (the first electronic opera); **Dad/La-La** *A shoe full of stars* (YAM Awards Best Opera 2018); **King Hrothgar** *Beowulf* (Proper Job Theatre); **Punch** *Crocodile* (a dark-web animated opera) and **Navin** *The End of the World Party* (Hull Urban Opera).

Concert performances have included Gershwin's *Porgy & Bess* (Leeds Philharmonic Orchestra); Haydn's *Mass in time of War*; Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* as well as an eclectic mix of song recitals for Leeds Lieder, &Piano, Britten-Pears Arts and the Leeds Opera Festival.

Neil is the first classical artist for sE Electronics and NORD (world-leading microphones & digital pianos), director of ArtSongStory (compelling videos of art-song) and is proud to be supported by Penhaligon's British Perfumers, VivoBarefoot shoes, Mason Cycles, Hunt Wheels and Tailfin Bikepacking equipment. His work as a voiceover artist has had over 100 million plays.

Outside of opera, Neil is a keen barista and adventure cyclist.