
ROMAN RIVER MUSIC

PRESS RELEASE

COLCHESTER BREAKS NEW GROUND WITH A CHAMBER OPERA “IN THE MAKING” AND A NIGHT OF CABARET

hEARd: ‘What we heard’ - a night of voices exploring love and humanity.

Jessica Walker: cabaret songs from the 20th century

On 16 September Roman River Music puts the spotlight on the storytelling powers of the human voice, offering up a double bill evening of performers whose careers have danced the intoxicating borderline between West End, Opera, Classical and Cabaret performance.

At 6pm, soprano, writer and actress Lila Palmer will be joined by composer Theo Jamieson (last spotted conducting Sheridan Smith in *Funny Girl*) rising star director Miranda Cromwell (National Theatre) and an extraordinary international cast, to break free of the constraints between chamber music and theatre with their dramatic quartet, **hEARd**, onstage at **The Mercury Theatre, Colchester**, complete with after show discussion.

Orlando Jopling, Artistic Director at Roman River Music, says, “Something new is coming to town! Fusing theatre and instrumentals, **hEARd** is a chamber opera being created right here in Colchester.

“This year’s festival aims to push the boundaries beyond the traditional, with new and exciting performances that will challenge people’s expectations and introduce them to something totally new. **hEARd** is set to be a thought-provoking, dramatic evening of theatre.”

At 9pm join internationally acclaimed singer Jessica Walker and accompanist Joseph Atkins for a scintillating yet forgotten history of some of the great ladies of popular song from the last century, including the ground-breaking Victorian male impersonators Vesta Tilley and Hetty King, 1930s Parisian cabaret queen Suzy Solidor, Britain’s lesser known WW2 sweetheart Pat Kirkwood, and sultry French 1960s chanteuse Barbara. Live at Colchester Arts Centre.

Jessica Walker’s voice has been described by the New York Times as ‘a pure, bright mezzo-soprano of such melting beauty I think I could listen to it forever’ and having ‘luminous, androgynous appeal’ by *The Stage*.

“Transport your mind away for the evening to a stylish, dark and smoky members club, for a complete tour of 20th century cabaret music with chanteuse Jessica Walker. From Victorian impersonators, right through to 1960’s France, Jessica will move you effortlessly through the decades, for an evening of music like no other. This is a unique opportunity to witness such a highly acclaimed star, right in the heart of Colchester.”

Tickets are on sale for **hEARd** though mercurytheatre.co.uk and Jessica Walker through romanrivermusic.org.uk.

ENDS

Issued by Loudmouse PR. For further information, please contact Frances Fleming, marketing and communications manager for Roman River Music, frances@loudmousepr.com or 07946 268341.

Notes to editor:

Roman River Music Festival '17

Saturday 9 September

11.30pm Set Sail

Sunday 10 September

10am Come and Sing

Thursday 14 September

8pm Opening Night

Friday 15 September

3 & 6pm Joseph Toonga

6pm Chiaroscuro Quartet

9pm Maya Youssef

Saturday 16 September

11am-4pm Sound Factory

Midday Street Hunt

3pm & 6pm hEARd

6pm Clip

9pm Jessica Walker

Sunday 17 September

4pm NYC Fellows

8pm Natalie Clein

Friday 22 September

8pm Clio Gould & Friends

Saturday 23 September

11am Harriet Mackenzie

2pm Trio Apaches

8pm Benjamin Grosvenor

Sunday 24 September

11am Oboe Quartets

6pm Illyria Consort

Wednesday 27 September

8pm Gwyneth Herbert & Will Duke

Thursday 28 September

8pm The King's Singers

Friday 29 September

Out of Water – watch this space!

11am & 1pm Abi's Adventure

8pm Mahler Symphony No 9

Saturday 30 September

6pm Bach Mass in B Minor

Sunday 1 October

4 pm Festival Finale

Read and download the full programme at:

<https://www.flipsnack.com/Romanrivermusic/roman-river-music-festival-17.html>

About Roman River Music

Roman River Music brings internationally renowned performers to informal and unexpected venues in Colchester and coastal Essex each year for a 3-week festival. Our festival is informal, open to everybody, with no rules. We convert disused urban buildings into performance venues because there is no concert hall in Colchester. Audiences can clap when they want, bring drinks into the concerts, and no shushing is allowed! We run bars and often serve food as well.

With our partners Dance East, the Mercury Theatre, and Colchester Arts Centre, we commission new work and collaborations, nurture emerging talent. We give artists the time and space to develop their skill and create new work among the salt marshes and wide open skies of coastal Essex.

We create opportunities for over 1,000 young people to compose, perform or listen to music and get involved in the performing and visual arts.

Active involvement in music by schoolchildren has been shown to improve concentration, self-confidence, social awareness and ability in maths and English. Giving young people the chance to listen to live music and develop their own music-making has remained at the core of our organisation, and our dream is to give every schoolchild within reach of the festival the life-enhancing opportunity to compose, perform or listen to music.

The charity combines strong grassroots support from over 100 volunteers with a truly international quality programme. The summer festival 2017 concerts were broadcast on Radio 3.