

**MEDIA RELEASE: IMMEDIATE**

**‘Sailing to the Marvellous’**: premier performance of a new work of contemporary theatre for Bridlington’s ‘Priory 900’ celebrations

**Sat 19 October**

**7.30pm**

**The Priory Church of St Mary, Bridlington, YO16 7JX**

**Tickets: £5 & free for under 21s**

Providing the climax to Bridlington Priory’s 900<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, a marvellous, new piece of contemporary music sails into Bridlington crewed by top international musicians and local people.

*Sailing to the Marvellous*, an innovative work of musical theatre by Cheryl Frances-Hoad and Adam Strickson, explores the hopeful journeys we all undertake, whether we’re spiritual or not, in search of refuge, friendship and belonging.

Childhood, with its sense of wonder and openness, is central to this colourful and musically adventurous performance. Local school children have contributed richly to the words and images of a piece that they themselves will sing, alongside musicians of national and international repute.

But this isn’t simply a celebration of the history of Bridlington Priory. The importance of its traditions of worship, welcome and sanctuary across the centuries are enhanced by compelling stories of contemporary journeys in search of safety, and enduring acts of generosity.

Runa, the main character and soprano, is a young woman fleeing conflict in the Middle East in a leaky boat across the Mediterranean; and, appropriately, given the dedication of the Priory Church to St Mary, the story also explores the mother and child relationship, and the relationship between children who have lost their parents through war and people who care for them.

Historical, contemporary, deeply moving and relevant for our times, *Sailing to the Marvellous* is a theatrical celebration of the journey of life in the magnificent surroundings of Bridlington Priory, and a reminder of all those who undertake journeys in the hope of better lives.

To book tickets and for more information go to [www.priory900.org](http://www.priory900.org) or

telephone 075383 432163 or in person at -

The Shop, The Priory, Church Green, Bridlington YO16 7JX (open Monday to Friday 10 am to 4 pm; Saturday 10 - 12 noon; Sunday 1 -4 pm)

**ENDS**

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## **MEDIA INFORMATION**

### **1) Priory 900**

*Sailing to the Marvellous* was commissioned by 'Priory 900', a year-long programme of events celebrating the nine-hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Bridlington Priory. The stated theme of the programme is: Celebrating the Journey. This involves: the exploration of the original vision of the Priory's foundation to promote spiritual growth, learning and hospitality for the whole community; the life and achievements of the Priory and its people, past, present and future, and its place in the wider community; the life of the whole of the community of Bridlington and its hinterland. Priory 900 acknowledges funding from Arts Council England, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Heritage Lottery Funding. For further information regarding Priory900 go to: [www.priory900.org](http://www.priory900.org).

### **2) Wingbeats**

*Sailing to the Marvellous* is produced for Priory 900 by Wingbeats. Wingbeats was the East Riding of Yorkshire's Cultural Olympiad project and part of '[Imove](#)', [Legacy Trust](#) UK's celebratory programme for Yorkshire and part of the Cultural Olympiad. *Sailing to the Marvellous* is by Adam Strickson and Cheryl Frances-Hoad, the creative Wingbeats duo who wrote and composed the critically-acclaimed *Amy's Last Dive*. They were awarded an Arts Council England grant to write this work, and Frances-Hoad received funding from the Performing Rights Society 'Women in Music' programme.

In order to produce and stage *Sailing to the Marvellous*, Wingbeats has received funding from Arts Council England through their Grants for the Arts Scheme, and from East Riding of Yorkshire Council, The Lords Feoffees of the Manor of Bridlington and private sponsorship. For more information about Wingbeats and its past work in Bridlington go to <http://www.imovearts.co.uk/past-projects/cultural-olympiad/wingbeats/>

### **3) Schools and Community Groups**

Local musical partners include the choir of Burlington Junior School, pupils from Our Lady and St Peters and Sledmere Primary schools, the Bridlington Community Choir and the church choirs of the Priory and Beverley Minster, together with the East Riding Senior Percussion and professional soloists.

### **4) Cheryl Frances-Hoad (Composer)**

Cheryl Frances-Hoad was born in Essex in 1980 and received her musical education at the Yehudi Menuhin School, Gonville and Caius College (University of Cambridge) and Kings College London. She was the first DARE Cultural Fellow in the Opera Related Arts in association with Opera North and the University of Leeds during 2012. Cheryl won the BBC Young Composer Competition in 1996 at the age of 15 and since then her works have garnered numerous prizes and awards, including the Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize (UK, 2007), the Sun River Composition Prize (China, 2007), The International String Orchestra Composition

Competition (Malta, 2006), The Bliss Prize (UK, 2002), the first Robert Helps International Composition Prize (University of Florida, 2005), the Mendelssohn Scholarship (UK, 2002) and the Cambridge Composer's Competition (UK, 2001). In 2010 Cheryl became the youngest composer to win two awards in the same year at the BASCA British Composer Awards (her setting of Psalm 1 won the Choral category, and *Stolen Rhythm* for solo piano won the Solo or Duo category). Many of her works have been generously supported by the RVW Trust, the Britten Pears Foundation, the PRS for Music Foundation, the Nicholas Boas Charitable Trust and the Bliss Trust.

Cheryl's debut CD has received a 4 star review in *The Guardian*. Andrew Clements writes "There's something engagingly freewheeling about Frances-Hoad's works, the feeling that she is quite unselfconscious about the music she writes and oblivious to how others might categorise it."

Paul Driver in *The Times* writes "Frances-Hoad is a remarkable talent. This retrospective of her chamber works is like a declaration of faith in the eternal verities of composition". *The Glory Tree* was also picked as BBC Music Magazine's October "Chamber Music Choice".

<http://www.cherylfranceshoad.co.uk/>

#### 4) Natalie Raybould (Soprano, Runa)

Soprano Natalie Raybould studied at St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, and the Royal Academy of Music, London, and was awarded an Associateship of the RAM in 2011.

Natalie has worked with Opera North, ROH2, The Opera Group, Tête à Tête, The RSC, National Theatre Studio, Little Angel Theatre, Aldeburgh Productions and others in developing new operas, concert works, music theatre and plays. Recent credits include Amy Johnson *Amy's Last Dive* (Cheryl Frances-Hoad), Cousin Shelley (cover) *Anna Nicole* (Turnage) for the Royal Opera House, and Crispina Philomena Crackweasel/Goosey John *Dr. Quimpugh's Casebook of Peculiar Afflictions* (Martin Ward/Phil Porter) for Summerhall, Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2013. Natalie is a regular guest artist with the French contemporary ensemble L'Instant Donné and the Birmingham *Doom Tuba* duo ORE, and has most recently devised, composed and performed in *Lullaby*, an interactive piece for babies for Polka Theatre. [www.natalieraybould.co.uk](http://www.natalieraybould.co.uk)

#### 5) Jonathan Lo (Musical Director)

Hong Kong-born Briton Jonathan Lo was a semi-finalist in the 2012 London Symphony Orchestra Donatella Flick Competition, as well as the youngest of the competitors in the Malko Competition for Conductors 2012 in Copenhagen. Jonathan read music at the University of Oxford, before studying conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music on a major scholarship under Clark Rundell, graduating with distinction and winning the Mortimer Furber Prize in Conducting. Jonathan serves as an assistant conductor for the Gabrieli Consort, and is currently Musical Director of the Sheffield Philharmonic, University of

Southampton Sinfonietta and King's College London Symphony Orchestra, as well as music director designate with the New Bristol Sinfonia.

Born in 1987, Jonathan has conducted orchestras internationally and nationally, most notably the **Danish National Symphony Orchestra**, the **Manchester Camerata**, the **Gabrieli Consort**, the **London Sinfonietta**, and the **Orquestra do Algarve**.

In opera, Jonathan has conducted complete staged performances of *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan Tutte* (Oxford Opera), *Die Zauberflöte* (Opera Lyrica, Oxford), *Anna Bolena* (Opera Seria, Manchester), *Oresteia* (Leeds), as well as serving as conductor for the RNCM's opera excerpts programme. Equally comfortable in contemporary music, Jonathan conducted the premieres of the operas *Flight Path* by Stephen Kilpatrick and *Amy's Last Dive* by Cheryl Frances-Hoad.

Jonathan has worked and studied with conductors such as **Sir Mark Elder**, **Jac van Steen**, **Elgar Howarth** and **Paul McCreesh**. He has worked with internationally renowned musicians such as **Simon Keenlyside**, **Sarah Conolly**, **Nicholas Daniels** and **Benjamin Frith**.

<http://www.jonathanlo.org/biography.htm>

#### **6) Adam Strickson (Writer/Artistic Advisor)**

Adam is a poet, librettist and producer and is currently Teaching Fellow in Creative Writing (.4) at the University of Leeds. He has worked as a performer and maker, and co-founded Chol Theatre, the pioneering inter-cultural company based in Huddersfield.

His first collection of poetry, *An Indian Rug Surprised by Snow*, was published in 2005 by Wrecking Ball Press and he recently won the Yorkshire Prize in the Yorkshire Open Poetry Competition.

Adam regularly collaborates with composers and his opera, *Green Angel*, was premiered in Leeds in January 2011. He was the Director and Librettist for both Wingbeats' Cultural Olympiad performances, 'Flight Paths' and 'Amy's Last Dive'. He is currently Poet in Residence at Trinity Leeds, the largest retail development in Europe in 2013.

#### **6) Rebecca Jenkins (Artistic Director)**

Rebecca is an actor, director & arts events manager living on the Yorkshire Wolds, near Driffield. She is Director of Rusticus Theatre Arts who produce family arts events at Sewerby Hall. Other recent projects have included directing the Carriageworks Theatre Academy's summer production, Event Manager of the Flying Day at Sewerby Hall in July 2011 for Wingbeats, and co-directing the 2012 Beverley Literature Festival with Lara Goodband.

As a West End Actor, Rebecca's professional credits include William Shakespeare's 'As You Like It' with Sienna Miller at The Wyndhams Theatre, London and an award-winning production of 'Sweeney Todd' at the New Ambassadors Theatre & Trafalgar Studios London, and most recently, Craig Revel Horwood's production of 'Chess The Musical' at the Princess of Wales Theatre, Toronto

Rebecca is currently working with communities in Stamford Bridge and Driffield in developing public art as part of the Passing Places Project, along the Sustrans managed Way of the Roses Cycle Route from Morecambe to Bridlington.