



Visionary souls

British tenor Allan Clayton brings his critically-acclaimed interpretation of Britten's *Peter Grimes* to home shores before crossing the ocean to make his Metropolitan Opera debut in Brett Dean's *Hamlet*

'He [Allan Clayton] perfectly embodies the figure of the persecuted [Peter Grimes], the anguish of the one who barely survives each day and has been condemned as a matter of principle. He masterfully deploys the greatest delicacy and lyrical fragility in his reflections on pain and the universe towards the end of the first act, the most memorable moment of his outstanding performance.'

Bachtrack, April 2021



Following its success in Madrid in 2021, Deborah Warner's acclaimed production of *Peter Grimes* comes to the Royal Opera House stage in March 2022, once again with the British tenor Allan Clayton in the title role. His performances at the Teatro Real were hailed as "outstanding" and Clayton is looking forward to bringing his interpretation of this demanding role to audiences in the UK.

"I have sung the music of Britten since I was about eight", comments Clayton, "and for me this piece is pretty much the epitome of his music-making. *Peter Grimes* is an incredible piece of music drama. It is a work that holds you from the very first scene, especially in this brilliant production by Deborah Warner."

"The performances in Madrid were incredibly special" he continues, "but it will be particularly meaningful to perform this quintessentially English opera at home. I am looking forward to singing *Peter Grimes* at Covent Garden with the orchestra of the Royal Opera House under the baton of Sir Mark Elder and in the company of two great knights, Sir Bryn Terfel and Sir John Tomlinson."

Clayton has had a close connection with the music of Benjamin Britten throughout his career, both nationally and internationally. Having first sung the role of Peter Grimes in his student days at Cambridge, he prudently put the piece aside till he felt the time was right for him to perform this titan of the operatic canon on the opera stage. After Covent Garden, the production will be seen at the Opéra national de Paris, once again with Clayton in the title role.

Immediately following the six performances of *Peter Grimes* in London, Clayton will cross the Atlantic to make his debut at the Metropolitan Opera in the US premiere of Brett Dean's *Hamlet*, opening on 13 May. The opera's premiere production at Glyndebourne in 2017 proved a triumph not only for its composer but also for Clayton in the title role. His performance was eulogised by Richard Morrison in *The Times*: 'Forget Cumberbatch. Forget even Gielgud. I haven't seen a more physically vivid, emotionally affecting or psychologically astute portrayal of the Prince of Denmark than Allan Clayton gives in this sensational production.'

"There are parallels between the characters," says Clayton. "Both Grimes and Hamlet are viewed with suspicion, men who are 'mad or drunk' or gripped by 'lunacy'. But they are richly-drawn characters of flesh and blood, exasperated and tormented by the circumstances that ultimately destroy them."

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Thursday 17 March 2022, 6.30pm

Wednesday 23, Saturday 26, Tuesday 29, Thursday 31 March 2022, 7pm

Sunday 20 March 2022, 4pm

Royal Opera House, London

Allan Clayton Peter Grimes | **Maria Bengtsson** Ellen Orford | **Bryn Terfel** Captain Balstrode | **John Tomlinson** Swallow | **Jacques Imbrailo** Ned Keene | **Catherine Wyn-Rogers** Auntie | **Rosie Aldridge** Mrs Sedley | **John Graham-Hall** Bob Boles

Mark Elder conductor | **Deborah Warner** director | **Michael Levine** set designer | **Luis F. Carvalho** costume designer | **Peter Mumford** lighting designer | **Kim Brandstrup** movement director | **Orchestra of the Royal Opera House** | **Royal Opera Chorus**

Britten *Peter Grimes* (production new to the Royal Opera House)