

## From Princes to Kings

**Ed Lyon, celebrated for his expressive artistry and searching explorations of operatic characters, makes his role debut as Grimoaldo in Handel's *Rodelinda* for Garsington Opera (13 June – 19 July 2025)**

**Lyon's 2025-26 season includes return to Welsh National Opera in title-role of Bernstein's *Candide* and outing as Lurcanio in the Royal Ballet and Opera's new staging of Handel's *Ariodante***

'Lyon has the full range of tone that the Monteverdi demands, from hushed through lustrous to dark, and he decorates the text with formidable assurance,' *The Guardian*, five-star review of Monteverdi's *Orfeo* at Garsington Opera, 2 June 2022

'Ed Lyon, for his part, is fast becoming an A-list tenor and as [Ariodante's] brother Lurcanio his voice was magisterial,' *Bachtrack*, review of Royal Opera concert performance of *Ariodante*, 23 November 2020

Intense emotions and the myriad ways in which they shape and move individuals are a source of endless fascination for Ed Lyon. The tenor's deep engagement with the psychology of the characters in his operatic repertoire has inspired rave reviews and audience ovations, while his expressive artistry in the concert hall has likewise enjoyed critical acclaim. He is ready to span the emotional gamut again this summer with a leading role in Handel's *Rodelinda* for Garsington Opera (13 June – 19 July). He will also reprise his alluring interpretation of the title-role in Welsh National Opera's staging of Leonard Bernstein's *Candide* (17 September – 17 October), and return to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden to sing the role of Lurcanio in a new production to be staged by Jetske Mijnsen of Handel's *Ariodante* (9 December – 21 December).

Since graduating from the National Opera Studio twenty years ago, Ed Lyon has gained a wealth of experience and the profound insights that come with it. He made his Garsington Opera debut as Quint in the festival's landmark production of Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, winner of the 2020 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Opera and Music Theatre, and returned in 2022 for its staging of Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, in which he took the title-role. 'At the centre of it all was Ed Lyon's Orfeo – lived, moved and sung with absolute conviction,' noted *Opera Magazine* in its five-star review of the production; *The Times*, meanwhile, noted how his 'epic central performance culminate[d] in a white-hot account of the virtuosic Possente spirito'.

Ed Lyon is set to return to Garsington's magnificent Opera Pavilion this summer as part of a world-class cast. He will assume the central role of Grimoaldo in Ruth Knight's new production of Handel's *Rodelinda*, which opens on Friday 13 June for a run of seven performances, conducted by Olivier Award winner, Peter Whelan. The production marks the tercentenary of *Rodelinda*'s first performance at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket in 1725. Grimoaldo is both perpetrator and victim of the events that follow his usurpation of the Milanese throne. Handel's music reflects the multidimensional complexity of Grimoaldo's character and the doubts that ultimately temper his villainous actions, expressed in five contrasting arias and sundry potent dramatic recitatives.

"*The Turn of the Screw* at Garsington was a wonderful experience for me," Ed Lyon recalls. "It felt like exactly the right role at exactly the right time. That led to a conversation with Douglas Boyd, Garsington's Artistic Director, who asked me what I would like to do next for the festival, something that had never happened to me before, and to me suggesting Orfeo. I was never comfortable in the 'young prince' roles, those rather two-dimensional, cardboard-cutout characters who come on stage to sing a beautiful aria and then depart. Quint in *The Turn of the Screw* is a much more interesting character, and performing it in such a fascinating production, which went deep into his psychology, confirmed the importance to me of a role's gravity."

Performing Orfeo and Grimoaldo marks what Lyon regards as the start of his career's second act, a time to play kings rather than princes, fathers rather than sons. He comes to these mature roles blessed with a voice capable of producing a baritonal quality in its lower reaches while maintaining a famously lithe bel canto coloratura in its upper register. "Handel wrote the role of Grimoaldo for Francesco Borosini, whose incredibly wide range went from bass to tenor," notes Lyon. "He later composed the part of Bajazet in *Tamerlano* for Borosini, one of the first great tenor roles in opera. The vocal and psychological range of these characters suits me now. I sang Mozart's Tito in concert for Opéra de Rouen in 2022, which was a revelation to me. Not only did I feel absolutely ready to sing it, but also the character made total sense and felt ideal for my voice. I have the same sense with Monteverdi's Ulisse, Mozart's Idomeneo and other grown-up roles. I am now at the right age and stage to hold

those roles. It's like the old-fashioned path of career progression, where people grew into the repertoire that they were born to sing. That natural process of slow change and sustained development should be the goal for every singer."

Before starting *Rodelinda* rehearsals, Lyon's schedule is packed with choral dates. He will sing Elgar's Gerontius for the final concert in this year's Barnes Festival (29 March), before taking on the equally demanding role of Evangelist in the Bach Choir's annual Good Friday performance of Johann Sebastian Bach's *St Matthew Passion* at London's Royal Festival Hall (6 April). His season continues with Beethoven's *Missa solemnis* at Brangwyn Hall, Swansea, in company with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales under Andrew Manze (11 April), and the tenor arias in Bach's *St John Passion* at the Barbican Centre with the Academy of Ancient Music directed by Laurence Cummings (18 April).

Lyon launches his 2025-26 season by taking the title-role once again in James Bonas's visually striking staging of Bernstein's *Candide* for Welsh National Opera, which opens on Wednesday 17 September. *The Guardian* noted that he 'stood out vocally' at the production's premiere in 2023, with *The Arts Desk* concluding that he 'gets Candide's agreeable naivety to a tee, smiling sweetly as he commits a series of supposedly unintentional murders'. Lyon made his mark as Lurcanio at the Royal Opera House in a 2020 concert performance of *Ariodante* and returns in December 2025 for the work's eagerly awaited full production. "This will be my tenth show at Covent Garden. Lurcanio has three fantastic arias and a duet, which give the chance to dig a little into the nature of the character" the tenor comments. Handel's three-act opera, written for the original Covent Garden Theatre and first staged there in January 1735, spins a web of deceit, betrayal and revenge. Lurcanio, Ariodante's brother, emerges as a hero, winner of a duel against the schemer who has plotted against Ariodante and his beloved, the Princess Ginevra.

## Notes to the Editors

Ed Lyon's character interpretations draw from his work as a practitioner in Compassion Focused Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Hypnosis, with which he helps clients overcome performance anxiety and work-related stress, boost self-esteem and manage chronic pain. The experience of singing at the top level for 20 years has been richly complemented by his studies in psychology and practical application of psychotherapeutic interventions. "Singing requires the feeling of safety," he observes. "Every successful production I've ever been involved in has been a collaborative effort, where everyone works together as part of an ensemble and feels that they belong. To sing well, you have to feel safe in that way. I've found it so liberating to be able to help others, which is a wonderful thing to do, and also to examine whether I feel safe in whatever I happen to be performing. It has made a huge difference to my singing. It's so important to recognise how the voice is affected by the presence or absence of this feeling of safety, which in turn grows from the presence or absence of collaboration. That collaborative spirit and sense of safety belong together. That's where the magic happens in performance."

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## **Garsington Opera**

**13, 19, 21, 29 June, 6, 8, 19 July 2025**

**Garsington Opera, Buckinghamshire**

[Event page](#)

**Ed Lyon** Grimoaldo | **Lucy Crowe** Rodelinda | **Tim Mead** Bertarido | **Marvic Monreal** Eduige | **Hugh Cutting** Unulfo | **Brandon Cedel** Garibaldo | **Peter Whelan** conductor | **Ruth Knight** director | **Leslie Travers** designer | **Ben Pickersgill** lighting designer | **The English Consort**

Handel *Rodelinda*

#### **Welsh National Opera**

**17, 19, 21 September 2025, Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff**

**2 October 2025, Mayflower Theatre, Southampton**

**10 October 2025, Venue Cymru, Llandudno**

**17 October 2025, The Bristol Hippodrome, Bristol**

[Event Page](#)

**Ed Lyon** *Candide* | **Soraya Mafi** Cunégonde | **Aled Hall** Governor/Vanderdendur | **Ryan McAdams** conductor | **James Bonas** director | **Grégoire Pont** video and animations | **Ewan Jones** choreographer | **Thibault Van Craenenbroeck** set designer | **Nathalie Pallandre** costume designer | **Rob Casey** lighting designer | **Sebastian Frost** sound designer | **WNO Chorus** | **WNO Orchestra**

Bernstein *Candide*

#### **Royal Ballet and Opera**

**9, 11, 14, 17, 19, 21 December 2025**

**The Royal Opera House, London**

[Event Page](#)

**Ed Lyon** Lurcanio | **Emily D'Angelo** Ariodante | **Jacquelyn Stucker** Ginevra | **Elena Villalón** Dalinda | **Christophe Dumaux** Polinesso | **Peter Kellner** Il Re di Scozia | **Emyr Lloyd Jones** Odoardo | **William Spaulding** chorus director | **Royal Opera Chorus** | **Orchestra of the Royal Opera House**

Handel *Ariodante*