



Haunted London

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How to use:
 Events listed
 of all venues
 listings
 Abbreviations
 are as follows:
RFH Royal
 Elizabeth Hall; **PRP** Purcell Room; **SJSS**
 St John's Smith Square; **WH** Wigmore
 Hall; **SMIF** St Martin-in-the-Fields;
RAM Royal Academy of Music; **RCM**
 Royal College of Music; **TCM** Trinity
 College of Music; **GSMD** Guildhall
 School of Music and Drama. Details of
 Opera can be found at the end of
 Classical listings.

FREE Means that admission is free.
OFFER Means that discounted
 admission is available on production
 of this magazine.
 ▶ Before a day, denotes a closing
 date.
 ▶ After a day, denotes a starting date.

How to be listed

Listings must arrive by Wednesday,
seven days before publication, in writing
 or by email (martinhoyle@timeout.com).
 Please include admission prices, times,
 nearest **⓪**/rail/bus and a contact phone
 number. Listings can be sent by post or
 fax (020 7813 6001). Listings are free,
 but inclusion is not guaranteed due to
 limited space.



Proudly Canadian Canuck Gietz is set to play Jack, an earthy mechanic, in 'The Midsummer Marriage' at Covent Garden

Flash Gordon

Martin Hoyle meets the former maths teacher from Canada rapidly becoming one of the world's most accomplished tenors

'I fell down and split my pants – in every show. It became my calling card.' Gordon Gietz is recalling his PJ Proby tactics (genuine accidents, honestly), including one memorable scene from Carlisle Floyd's 'Susannah': 'I sat down – and completely opened up. I'd split everything from the zipper to the waistband. My next line was "There's more what you don't know about". I had to redirect my move...'

The tenor from Calgary stole the reviews in 'Sophie's Choice' at Covent Garden. The book's author William Styron said Gietz's young idealist Stingo (Styron himself) 'really captured who he was at the time, with the same kind of energy. It was the highest compliment.' Theatre and novelty are the lifeblood of opera for the young Canadian. 'I don't do much mainstream stuff – not because I don't like singing it, but the dramatic possibilities and public willingness to enter into a dialogue are greater in new or little-known work. You get some guy, all he sings is Rodolfo. He sounds glorious and can't act his way out of a paper bag.'

But the conventional repertory offers some plums. He recently did his first 'Carmen'. José's a great character. In the last scene he's over the edge. They said "You were a bit insane". I thought: How

can you say the things he says without being at the end of your rope? He's given up everything, even his own soul.'

Currently Gietz finds himself among those seeking their souls. Tippett's 'The Midsummer Marriage' considers themes of spiritual awakening – though he's part of the earthy couple rather than the exalted pair (parallels with Tamino/Papageno in 'The Magic Flute'). Tippett's accessible music is lumbered by the composer's own symbol-laden libretto. But Gietz defends the language: 'The way it's said

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is not arch or highbrow. The words he uses are vivid: they feel nice in the mouth, good on the ear.' And, a modern specialist, he knows of what he speaks: 'I just read the new libretto for a work I'm up for and thought: This is shit.' He's equally uncompromising about production: 'It's the biggest thing going on in the opera world. Opera is life with a soundtrack. Do we want to see every 't' crossed, every 'i' dotted?'

Next year he creates a new work by Kaija Saariaho, directed by Peter Sellars, conducted by Salonen. A dream team. But then 'I've been very, very lucky. The whole thing landed in my lap. I trained to

be a maths teacher...'. Friends suggested joining a chorus, opera school. Perhaps because he never set out with operatic aims, Gietz is happy with a highly selective career. 'This year I'm lucky: I've exactly six months free. It's a part-time job. You'll never be this age again – I've time to enjoy myself. It's a perfect life, with enough work to keep me going.' Next year, he adds rather wistfully, he's only got three free months. Other young singers should be so sad.

His careful pacing means there are plenty of roles, even away from the old warhorses, to tackle. 'I take Philip Langridge as my model: a great artist, not up his arsehole, a nice person, a great actor.' Ultimate ambition? 'Peter Grimes – he doesn't have to be old; it would make sense of the sexual side with Ellen. And he doesn't have to be heroic, like Vickers [another Canadian tenor who's left his mark on the role]. I love Britten – I'd love to do "Death in Venice". I want to do Stravinsky's "Rake" again; all the Janáček; the Prince in "Rusalka". For voice-refreshing tonic, Mozart, but the character must be right. I did Tamino a lot – never liked him. I did Idamante and loved it, but it's usually sung by a woman now. I'd love to do Idomeneo and Tito... I'll never run out of things to do.' Though he may find opera houses won't allow him the life of leisure much longer.

Gordon Gietz is in 'The Midsummer Marriage' at the Royal Opera House from Monday.

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Wednesday 26

Soul and Sparkle QEJH 7.30pm; £6-£35. Glinka's Capriccio brillante ('Jota aragonesa'), Dvořák's Cello Concerto and Tchaikovsky's 'Polish' Symphony 3. Vassily Sinaisky conducts the London Phil with the superb Peter Wispelwey (cello). *Repeated Fri.*

LSO Chamber Orchestra Barbican 7.30pm; £5-£21. Gordan Nikolitch (violin) directs a programme of Rossini (Duet for double-bass & cello), Paganini (Violin Concerto 1), Tchaikovsky ('Souvenir de Florence').

Queue it for Hewitt WH 7.30pm; returns only for Angela's Bach. **Hidden Lands** SJSS 7.30pm; £6-£15, cones 20 per cent off. Wissam Bustany (flute) and Nigel Clayton (piano) give the premiere of sonatas by Yevhen Stankovych and Daryl Runswick, the London premiere of Abdalla El-Masri's Four Pieces; plus Mel Bonis, Robert Dick ('Fish Are Jumping') and Jongen (Sonata Op77).

Monteverdi Vespers Christ Church Spitalfields 7.30pm £10-£35. Masterpieces from 1610. Paul McCreesh conducts the habitually superb Gabrieli Consort and Players with Daniel Taylor and Charles Daniels, prior to recording for DG. *Repeated tomorrow.*

Something Like a Dame RAH 7.45pm; £5-£15. Globe-trotting Dame Gillian Weir plays the vast Albert Hall organ; Elgar, Liszt, Howells, Ives, Guy Bovet and Vierne.

Lunchtime Piano St James Piccadilly 1.10pm; £3 donation appreciated. Timothy Peake plays Beethoven's Eroica Variations, Ginastera, Villa-Lobos, Piazzolla.

Harp at Sundown Blackheath Halls 6pm; £3, cones £1.50. Helen Radice plays. **FREE Shopping with Chopin** St George's Hanover Square 12.45pm; collection. Plus Franck (Violin Sonata), Ysaÿe, Hiuw Watkins, Vickie Sayles (violin), Marc Corbett-Weaver (piano).

Thursday 27

Ancien but Enlightened QEJH 7.30pm; £6-£30. Another stage of pre-revolutionary Parisian cultural life evoked