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Byron Watson Baritone

Australian/British baritone Byron Watson completed an Honours Music degree at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD), studying with Rudolf Piernay and Janice Chapman. He received scholarships from the Australian Opera Auditions Committee Inc., the GSMD Trust and the Ian Potter Foundation.

In 2010 Byron will sing the role of Mr Lindquist and cover Anthony Warlow as Fredrik Egerman in Opera Australia's *A Little Night Music* in Sydney. In 2009 he played the role of Frid the same production in Melbourne. Byron sang in the Domain on Australia Day as part of the 2010 National Holiday celebrations, was a prize winner in the 2010 Australian-German Opera Grant, Melbourne, sang in the Highlights of Opera Concert for the Australian Opera Auditions Committee at the Sydney Opera House, and is popular guest artist for High Tea at Sydney Opera House. Also in 2010, he will return to London to sing in *Carmen* at the O2 Arena, and in 2011 will make his debut with the State Opera of South Australia.

In 2008/2009 Byron appeared as Harry and understudied Richard E Grant as Henry Higgins in *My Fair Lady* with Opera Australia, which toured to Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra, Sydney, and New Zealand. Other 2009 engagements included solo and joint concerts in Sydney and Orange with Simon Kenway at the piano, which were featured on ABC Classic FM, the role of Alessio, as well as one performance as Rodolfo, in Pacific Opera's new production of *La Sonnambula* in Sydney and the role of Walter Burley Griffin in *Capitol* with the Street Theatre, Canberra.

In 2007 he sang the title role in the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's opera, *The Enchanted Pig*, for the Young Vic Theatre Company, which toured nationally, and a concert with Thomas Adès and Northern Sinfonia. He also appeared on BBC Radio 3 *In Tune* with Jonathan Dove and as both the Wolf and Cinderella's Prince in *Into the Woods*, for ROH2 at Linbury Studio Theatre for the Royal Opera House.

Byron has been a guest of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in Barony Hall in Glasgow, a baritone soloist in the *Matthäus-Passion* with the Northern Sinfonia under the direction of Sir Roger Norrington and similarly with the Glasgow Symphony Orchestra. He also sang the role of Peter in Elgar's *The Kingdom* with the Buxton Symphony Orchestra. Byron has given solo and joint recitals in the UK, Norway, Portugal and Australia, where he was broadcast on ABC Television. For Clonter Opera's production of *Madama Butterfly*, he played Prince Yamadori/Imperial Commissioner and covered Sharpless, and in 2006 joined English Touring Opera, singing Sciarrone in *Tosca*.

While studying at GSMD, Byron understudied Anthony in *Sweeney Todd* (directed by David McVicar) for Opera North, was a prize-winner of the Great Elm Vocal Awards, and was a finalist of the Kathleen Ferrier Bursary. In 2002, Byron made his film and television debut as Dick in *Tomorrow La Scala* (based on Sweeney Todd), a BBC feature film which premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in the Un Certain Regard section.

Following this, Byron joined the Opera School of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, receiving the RSAMD Endowment Trust International Scholarships on two occasions, two bursaries from the Countess of Munster Musical Trust and an

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award from the Tait Memorial Trust. Roles there included Count Almaviva (Edinburgh Festival Theatre), Demetrius, Don Inigo Gomez and Melisso. Other roles performed in part include Onegin, Pandolfe (*Cendrillon*), Lescaut, Marcello, Papageno, Bottom, Guglielmo and Don Giovanni.

Byron also received a full scholarship to attend the inaugural "Song in Collaboration" Summer School at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Canada, where he gave recitals and participated in masterclasses with Ian Burnside and Edith Wiens. He has participated in other masterclasses including Sir Thomas Allen and the Samling Foundation, Donald Maxwell in association with the Friends of Scottish Opera, Martin Katz, Graham Johnson, Francois le Roux and Rosalind Plowright.

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