

The Singing Foundation
NURTURING TOMORROW'S PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTISTS

NEWS

SPRING 2002

ISSUE 4

Just because it's June

No-one can say we don't listen! Friends and supporters alike have asked over the years that we redress the balance and hold concerts, not just in the Lakes but in the North East as well.

So we've come up with a gem of a programme and a world first - the 'Cardiff Singer of the World' Katarina Karnéus comes together for the first time with the gorgeous Rebecca Evans and pianist Michael Pollock. We've put them smack bang in the middle of the region. Durham and June are the facts to fasten on and a mezzo and soprano to die for!

We've chosen another Methodist church as the venue, a particularly fine example with a splendid acoustic. What more can we say? It's irresistible!

Setting the Standard

Setting ever higher standards has one big drawback. The next hill to climb becomes a mountain - but we think we've done it again with our next masterclass in April. That said, we're stuck for words to describe the artist who's going to grace our gathering on Ullswater. Quite simply she is a legend.

Ileana Cotrubas is the Romanian diva who seems to have done it all. From Barcelona to Buenos Aires, Salzburg to San Francisco, she is recognized as a soprano who has scaled the heights of every great role in Verdi and Puccini, sung Offenbach to Bach, Haydn oratorios and much of the lieder repertoire.

As well as mastering so many roles, it

is the sheer dramatic range involved that leaves one speechless. Fiery or sensuous, solemn or serene, all have been assumed with effortless art, which speaks volumes for this lady's drive, dedication and work-rate. It takes much more than a great voice to emerge from behind the Iron Curtain and come to dominate the great houses of most Western capitals. Undoubtedly she is up there with the best of her generation, if not of the century.

She has gone on to dominate other media too, making great recordings with the likes of Ricardo Muti, appearing on television broadcasts worldwide and starring in a host of films. She started winning prizes in the mid-sixties and has continued to do so ever since. And when she writes books, it is not the ghosted autobiography but an acclaimed text on 'Truth in Opera' (1998).

Using that overworked term *exceptional* is in this case justified. We are indeed privileged to have Ileana give us a few days of her time in April, in conjunction with our ever generous Patron Sir Thomas Allen, who has been instrumental in bringing her to us. Together they will be working with six young singers from across the world. What more is there to say - form an orderly queue please!



Ileana Cotrubas

*Tickets are on sale now
(01434 602885)*

Nothing Succeeds . . .

Ambition may have got the better of us here, but we're really out to break new ground in the visual arts over the next two years.

Antony Gormley, famed for his 'Angel of the North' and his explorations of identity in his numerous casts of the human form, is coming together with the American artist of light, James Turrell (see our separate piece) to build on the success of last year's *Divining* visual arts project. Not one, but all five local education authorities in Tyne and Wear are joining up with them when we apply our masterclass approach to the visual arts.

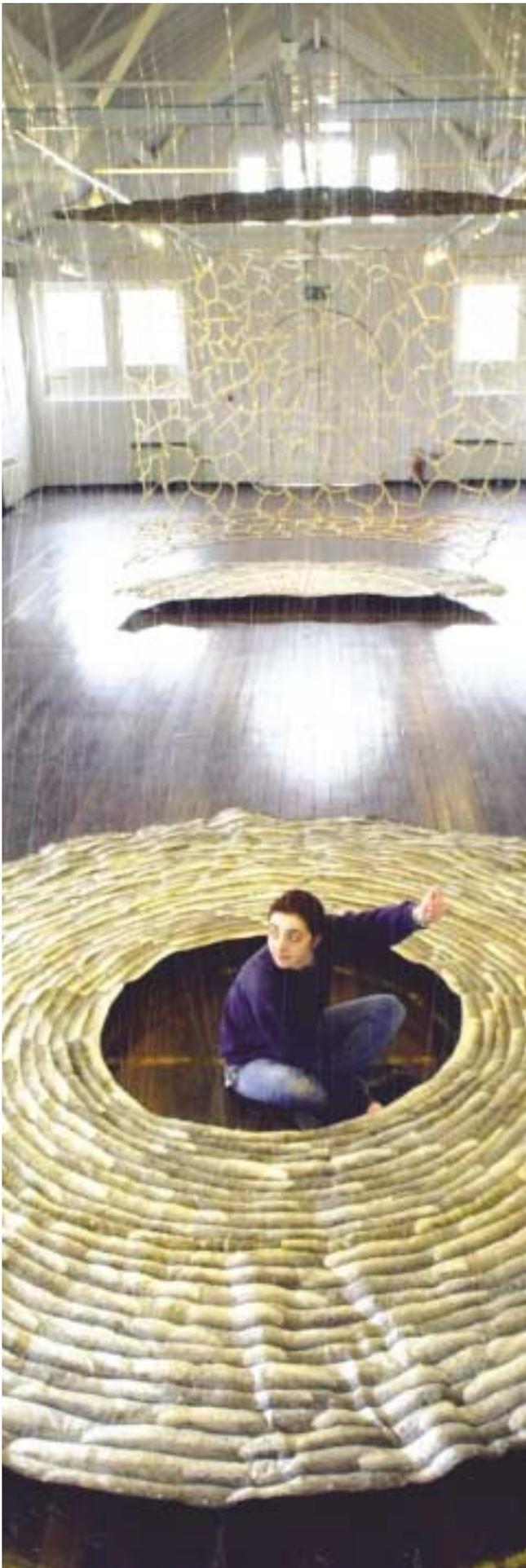
Expanding far beyond the usual confines of the classroom and studio, the 'Land and the Samling' and 'Arena' programmes will take ten young professional artists and involve gifted and talented 'A' Level Art students from across the region. Kielder Water and Forest Park will be the inspirational siting for the first year, where light-filled remoteness meets contemporary art and architecture. The group will form an ensemble, working together and residing on site. Five artists have already been chosen from a shortlist of nine to link up with mentor James Turrell. After an intense series of presentations and interviews last November, Elpida Hadzi Vasileva, Tanya Axford, Matt Stokes, Wolfgang Weileder and Claire Barber will each receive a commission and also go on to transfer what they

experience to the 'A' Level students involved, either individually or in groups. The participating 'A' Level students themselves – 60 this year – competed for places with their peers over a week of interviews held in Gateshead, Newcastle, South and North Tyneside and Sunderland which involved the trustees of the Samling Foundation for the first time in the selection processes. 'Land and the Samling' begins with a Symposium in February which is to be held at Newcastle's Civic Centre.

In December Antony Gormley will take over mentoring another five professionals in residencies and they in turn will be working with a second group of students studying art in schools across the region. We will be closely evaluating the progress of 'Land and the Samling' as it will inform the second year of the programme. We are currently exploring creative partnerships with amongst others the new Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead and fundraising for this project will be ongoing.

An exhibition of photographs by Mark Pinder documenting the artworks created at Kielder will be the climax of the first year, after which it will tour to the region's schools.

The Foundation gratefully acknowledges financial support from the Northern Rock Foundation for this two-year project.



Elpida Hadzi Vasileva

Famous Five

Our ground-breaking new arts programme, 'Land and the Samling' features five impressive talents, so far, to work alongside James Turrell. All have links with the North East and live and work in the region. Here's a hint of what might come.

Tanya Axford's latest installation at the Laing Gallery, a series of chandeliers, kept growing as each visitor was invited to add to it. Wolfgang Weileder's recent work is essentially architectural, his small buildings, bridges and jetties bafflingly denying the viewer exits and entrances.

Claire Barber is much taken with fable and legend, creating fabulous installations and patterns out of dust, feathers, 'gold' and wool. Elpida Hadzi Vasileva, winner of the Krasner Pollock award, uses exotic materials too, one of her most remarkable works (pictured left) made from thousands of salmon skins into an incandescent whole. Matt Stokes is more elusive (or maybe that should be 'allusive'), frequently producing temporary artworks from local people themselves through video shorts. Kielder, with its shimmering shifting patterns of light, should challenge all five.

James Turrell

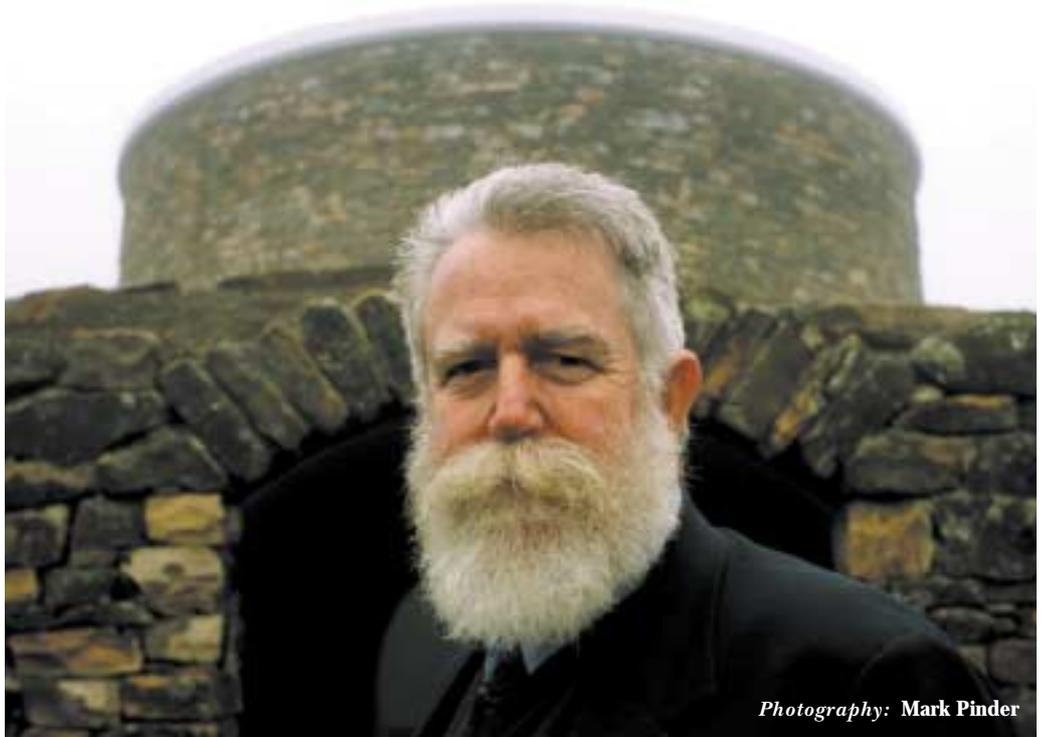
Acclaimed world wide as an artist of vision, James Turrell is neither a painter nor a sculptor. He works with light 'the light we cannot see' and he is a master at manipulating our normal perceptions in deceptively simple and elegant ways.

Born to Quaker parents in 1943 he planned to study mathematics but a passion for flying took hold and he trained as a pilot. His aeronautical, mathematical, architectural and philosophical nature is perhaps best manifested in his Skyspaces, external structures that mostly manipulate both natural and artificial light. Skyspaces have been built in Ireland, USA, Japan, Israel, Holland, France and in Northumberland at Kielder.

Visitors to the Kielder Skyspace find themselves in the middle of a clear, precise chamber where light and space play tricks on the brain so that the Kielder sky appears to be a solid, flat disc whose colour changes dramatically as dawn breaks or dusk descends.

'My work is not so much about my seeing as about your seeing. There is no-one between you and your experience,' he says.

James Turrell's life work, the Roden Crater project, is nearing completion in the Painted Desert outside Flagstaff in Arizona. Here he has been modifying an existing volcanic crater, altering its external shape and



Photography: Mark Pinder

creating a series of buried interconnecting Skyspaces within the cone. Some of these spaces are precisely designed to align with a variety of astronomical phenomena while others enable visitors to experience atmospheric conditions and the changing quality of light throughout the day in a pure and controlled environment. This work, under development for nearly 20 years, is due to be completed in 2002.

'My desire is to set up a situation to which I can take you and let you see. I am interested in light because of my interest in our spiritual nature and the things that empower us. My art deals with light itself, not as the bearer of revelation, but as revelation itself,' he said.

A sad farewell

The Samling Foundation paid tribute to the late Brian Sack who sadly passed away at the start of the year.

'I met Brian in 1981 following an open invitation to consider Sharrow as a second home any time I might wish to visit. Over the years I've done so on several occasions but perhaps the greatest satisfaction has been that of fulfilling Francis's wish, shared by Brian, that the large room at Bank House be a place where music might be performed. What has been lovely to see over the past two years is the joy and satisfaction that this has brought him when on several occasions he has sat in on masterclass sessions with gifted young singers.'

'Brian was a fine and generous man and I owe him a personal debt of gratitude as well as a great one on behalf of The Samling Foundation.'

Patron, Sir Thomas Allen CBE



Photography: Graham Edwards

Brian Sack and Francis Coulson photographed together in 1996 at the first annual Masterclass at Dovenest when they were our special guests.

St John's Smith Square



Photograph by John Donat

Some would say that the Foundation doesn't need to shout about its six years of achievements - just let the record and the quality of the programmes speak for themselves. But, with ever more ambitious targets and a ferociously competitive fund-raising environment, the time has inevitably arrived when we must consider raising our profile. St John's is the obvious choice for a London venue. Why St John's? To enter this elegantly refurbished piece of English Baroque, says Sir Hugh Casson, 'to enjoy its spaces, to listen to fine music is an

experience not to be matched in conventional halls.' It combines enormous visual flair with a marvellous acoustic, so fitting for a Foundation preoccupied with sound and visual image.

Situated in a quiet square in the heart of Westminster it is one of London's finest concert venues.

It will have to be a unique concert we'll arrange to justify all the effort involved. So the whole masterclass team and its Patron, Sir Thomas Allen are hard at work devising something quite different. Watch this space...

Sharrow Draw



Sharrow Bay Hotel on Ullswater graciously elected The Samling Foundation as the beneficiary of its annual charity raffle, raising a splendid £6,534 last year. At a special coffee morning early in December Brian Sack and Norma Proctor presented Samling Friend Ruth Hewetson (centre) with the cheque.

Diary Dates 2002

February 11th - 12th 'Land and the Samling'* The Foundation's Visual Arts Residency Programme in the North East begins with a Symposium led by James Turrell in Masterclass with Elpida Hadzi Vasileva, Tanya Axford, Matt Stokes, Wolfgang Weileder and Claire Barber and attended by 60 participating 'A' Level Students and their teachers from Tyne and Wear.

Symposium Venues: Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Fine Art Department (*A limited number of places are available for Friends on application.)

April 25th - 28th Ileana Cotrubas and Thomas Allen lead a unique Masterclass course on Lake Ullswater, culminating in a public masterclass with six specially selected outstanding young international singers on:

Saturday April 27th 7 p.m. Penrith Methodist Church

May 30th - June 30th The Foundation Alumni Exhibition will feature the work of Chilean artist Enrique Azócar, Circle Gallery, Theatre by the Lake, Keswick

Private View: Thursday May 30th 5.30 - 7 p.m.

Thursday June 20th 7 p.m. An Evening with Katarina Karnéus and Rebecca Evans with pianist Michael Pollock
7 p.m. Elvet Methodist Church, Old Elvet, Durham

Sunday June 23rd The Samling Picnic - the annual party in the garden at Dilston House, Corbridge with live music and art exhibition

Thursday September 19th Gala Concert with our Masterclass team, Thomas Allen, Patricia MacMahon, Malcolm Martineau and Simon Over with Samling Scholars Lisa Milne, Leigh Woolf, Jonathan Lemalu and Eric Reiger
7.30 p.m. St John's Smith Square, London

October, 'Land and the Samling Exhibition' The climax of the 2002 Artist in Residence programme with photographs by Mark Pinder documenting artworks created at Kielder Water and Forest Park, featuring the work of Elpida Hadzi Vasileva, Tanya Axford, Matt Stokes, Wolfgang Weileder, Claire Barber and the 60 participating 'A' Level students.

Venue and dates to be confirmed later

27th October - 3rd November, The Sixth Annual Masterclass Week with Thomas Allen, Patricia MacMahon, Paul Farrington, Malcolm Martineau, Simon Over and this year's 'six' specially selected young singers.

Public Masterclass, Thursday October 31st 2.00 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Gala Concert, Saturday November 2nd 7.p.m.
Penrith Methodist Church

December 'Arena' The second phase of the Foundation's Visual Arts Residency Programme North East (to be completed in Autumn 2003) begins with a Symposium led by Antony Gormley with five specially selected professional young artists and another group of talented and gifted 'A' Level Art students from across Tyne and Wear.

Venue and dates to be confirmed later

You can help us

Have you thought of becoming a Friend or Corporate Member of the Samling Foundation? Your subscription could make all the difference to our future and we believe we can enhance your experience of the arts by bringing the absolute best in the world to you and to young people across the North.

Our new three-tiered scheme offers something for everyone. To join simply complete the enclosed application form or for more information please call us on 01434 602885.

The Samling Foundation

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