

DAME FELICITY LOTT



A BOOK OF MEMORIES





CHRISTINA ATHINODOROU





A BOOK OF MEMORIES

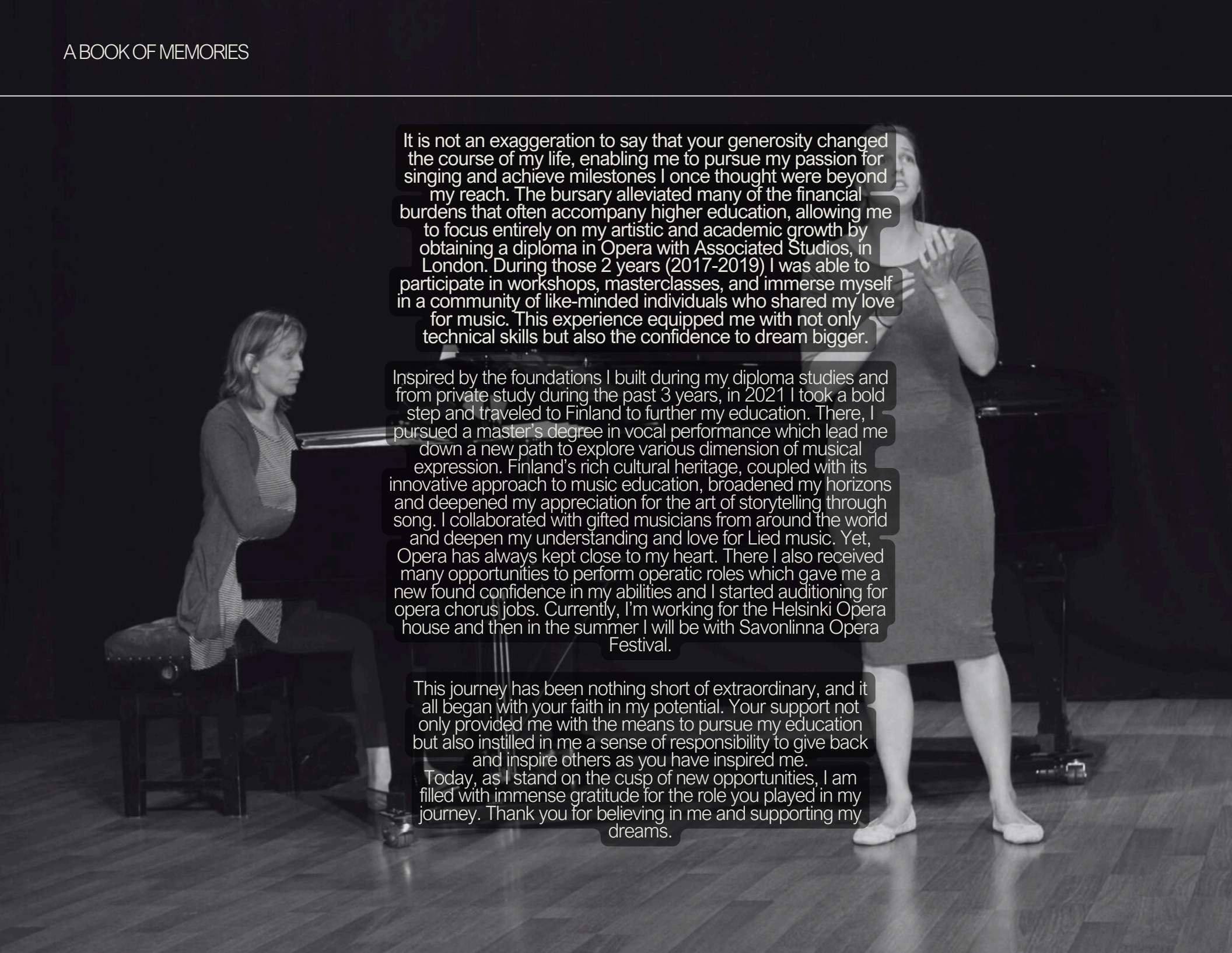
YOLANDA HARDLING



IMAGINATION

A NEW MONOLOGUE
OPERA





It is not an exaggeration to say that your generosity changed the course of my life, enabling me to pursue my passion for singing and achieve milestones I once thought were beyond my reach. The bursary alleviated many of the financial burdens that often accompany higher education, allowing me to focus entirely on my artistic and academic growth by obtaining a diploma in Opera with Associated Studios, in London. During those 2 years (2017-2019) I was able to participate in workshops, masterclasses, and immerse myself in a community of like-minded individuals who shared my love for music. This experience equipped me with not only technical skills but also the confidence to dream bigger.

Inspired by the foundations I built during my diploma studies and from private study during the past 3 years, in 2021 I took a bold step and traveled to Finland to further my education. There, I pursued a master's degree in vocal performance which led me down a new path to explore various dimensions of musical expression. Finland's rich cultural heritage, coupled with its innovative approach to music education, broadened my horizons and deepened my appreciation for the art of storytelling through song. I collaborated with gifted musicians from around the world and deepened my understanding and love for Lied music. Yet, Opera has always kept close to my heart. There I also received many opportunities to perform operatic roles which gave me a newfound confidence in my abilities and I started auditioning for opera chorus jobs. Currently, I'm working for the Helsinki Opera house and then in the summer I will be with Savonlinna Opera Festival.

This journey has been nothing short of extraordinary, and it all began with your faith in my potential. Your support not only provided me with the means to pursue my education but also instilled in me a sense of responsibility to give back and inspire others as you have inspired me.

Today, as I stand on the cusp of new opportunities, I am filled with immense gratitude for the role you played in my journey. Thank you for believing in me and supporting my dreams.



RUTH HOPKINS

A BOOK OF MEMORIES

Winning the Dame Felicity Lott Award at the end of my MMus at Royal Holloway was a pivotal moment in my career. The bursary supported my Diploma in Opera at Birkbeck University, which played a crucial role in my development as a singer. Having primarily performed as a choral scholar, the Diploma introduced me to drama lessons and I worked with National Opera Studio coaches, which transformed my approach to singing and built my confidence. I continued my training at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, studying with Christine Cairns, Robin Bowman, Andrew King, and contemporary music specialist Sarah Leonard. Their guidance inspired me to focus on Early and Contemporary performance practices, shaping the direction of my career. During this time, I won the Diana Ambache Women Composers' Performance Competition and the Corton Hyde Early Music Competition. The latter motivated me to form an ensemble to performing Monteverdi's works, which eventually grew into K'antu Ensemble—now the centrepiece of my professional life.

In 2012, I founded K'antu Ensemble to explore lesser-known early music, blending it with folk and world traditions using historically-informed techniques. Under my leadership, the ensemble has performed extensively across the UK at venues including Cadogan Hall, Symphony Hall, and Bridgewater Hall. Internationally, we represented the UK at Göttingen International Festival's 'Historische Reihe', and toured Egypt, Hungary, and Romania with the support of the British Council. Our work has also been featured in live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 from Broadcasting House and the Southbank Centre. As a soloist, I enjoy performing lute songs, art songs and have premiered works by Kerry Andrew, Philip Venables, George Holloway, and Robert Szymanek at venues including St Martin-in-the-Fields, Leeds Lieder Festival, and LSO St Luke's. A residency at the Banff Centre in Canada allowed me to explore multimedia approaches to the recital format for the 21st century. I am deeply passionate about inclusive music-making, believing that everyone should have access to live professional performances. Through K'antu Ensemble, I have built an extensive outreach programme, bringing music to people living with dementia and SEND communities. This work earned me a Live Music Now Fellowship and the role of Artistic Director for All Roads Lead to Alexander, a disability arts programme for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. I've also collaborated with the National Trust at The Firs, Elgar's Birthplace Museum, where I have created a visitor composition installation.

During the pandemic, I completed an Executive MBA at Oxford University's Merton College, focusing on social entrepreneurship. There I devised a new approach to co-curating music festivals with disabled participants and have piloted three festival events supported by United by 2022 and Arts Council England. I am now fundraising to establish a disability music festival as a charity, aiming to break down stigmas surrounding disability by providing opportunities for young able and profoundly disabled children to create music and perform together. My vision is to show how inclusive practices with the most severely disabled individuals can inspire positive change for everyone living with disabilities, fostering a more equitable and creative society.

As both a soloist and Artistic Director, I remain committed to connecting diverse audiences with the transformative power of live music, blending innovation with accessibility to expand the reach and impact of both early and contemporary music.

A BOOK OF MEMORIES

SUSANNAH WALSH



I WAS SO GRATEFUL AND HONOURED TO HAVE BEEN PRESENTED THE DAME FELICITY LOTT BURSARY IN MY FINAL YEAR OF MY BMUS DEGREE AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY IN 2014.

NOT ONLY WAS IT A VERY WELCOME FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR MY MMUS IN FLUTE PERFORMANCE AT TRINITY LABAN (2014 – 2016), BUT IT WAS LOVELY TO HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED FOR MY MUSICAL ABILITIES.

I LOVED MY TIME AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY, AND I PARTICULARLY ENJOYED WORKING ON MY SOLO PERFORMANCES, CHAMBER MUSIC AND PLAYING IN THE SYMPHONY AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRAS, PLUS ROYAL HOLLOWAY SINFONIETTA. AT TRINITY LABAN I WAS ABLE TO BUILD ON ALL THAT I HAD ACHIEVED AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY, EXPLORING NEW CHAMBER WORKS AND PARTICIPATING IN SEVERAL ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS, INCLUDING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH MEMBERS OF THE PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA AND WELSH NATIONAL OPERA.

MY PRIMARY INTEREST, IN TERMS OF PERFORMANCE, IS CHAMBER MUSIC, AND A HIGHLIGHT SINCE LEAVING TRINITY WAS PERFORMING IN A FLUTE, CELLO AND PIANO TRIO ON A CRUISE SHIP VISITING SEVEN COUNTRIES IN ASIA AND AFRICA. ANOTHER HIGHLIGHT WAS PERFORMING BACH'S BRANDEBURG CONCERTOS NOS 2 AND 4 ALONGSIDE PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS INCLUDING SUSAN MILAN. I AM NOW CURRENTLY WORKING AS AN ADMINISTRATOR FOR A CLASSICAL MUSIC ORGANISATION, AND IN MY SPARE TIME I PLAY IN VARIOUS ENSEMBLES IN LONDON. I AM LOOKING FORWARD TO PERFORMING BERLIOZ'S SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE IN SPRING 2025.

SINCE 2020, I HAVE ASSISTED THE DIRECTOR OF THE ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL AT ITS ANNUAL EVENTS IN OXFORDSHIRE, AND WITH THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS RECORDING ARM, EM RECORDS.

I LOVE LISTENING TO AND LEARNING ABOUT ALL SORTS OF MUSIC AND MY MAIN INTERESTS INCLUDE THE LIVES AND WORKS OF SCHUBERT AND SHOSTAKOVICH. I HOPE IN MY FUTURE CAREER TO BE ABLE TO DEDICATE MY TIME TO, AND PROMOTE, THEIR WORKS.

IT IS LOVELY TO HAVE BEEN ASKED TO PERFORM ALONGSIDE DAME FELICITY LOTT IN THIS EVENT, AND I THANK HER VERY MUCH AGAIN FOR AWARDING ME THIS PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIP.



COUNTESS CEPRANO IN 'RIGOLETTO'



'CHORUS' IN L'ELISIR D'AMORE

LEILANI BARRATT

During my time at Royal Holloway, I geared my degree towards performance as much as I could. I was a choral scholar in the chapel choir, I spent a lot of time practising my solo singing, and I put together a little opera company called 'Opera Delights' that performed an evening of operatic excerpts in the Picture Gallery (one of my fondest memories at Royal Holloway)!

So, receiving the Dame Felicity Lott Bursary was such an honour - not only was it some recognition of my love and dedication to performing, but also an opportunity to continue my performance studies after graduating. I put the money towards a week-long workshop run by the acclaimed mezzo-soprano Sally Burgess, and continued to have lessons with her. I was then offered a place on the Graduate Diploma Course at the Royal College of Music, and went on to receive a scholarship to do a Masters in Vocal Performance.

I am now a freelance singer and, most recently, have been offered the role of Cherubino in Mozart *Le nozze di Figaro* with Diva Opera - an absolute dream role for me since I saw my first opera at 14 years old! I feel very proud that I have been able to maintain a career in performing and am doing what I love, and I'm so excited to return to Royal Holloway and perform in the beautiful picture gallery, in celebration of both Dame Felicity Lott and of all the young musicians who received her generous bursary!

JAMES GOODLING

Dame Felicity Lott Award
Recipient

James Gooding



I am deeply honored to receive the Dame Felicity Lott award. My time at Royal Holloway has shaped me into a versatile musician and I look forward to further developing my skills as a vocal practitioner and performer. This recognition inspires me to pursue new opportunities and continue my musical journey with renewed dedication.