

# Concordia Foundation

'Building Bridges through Music and the Arts'

Founder & Artistic Director: Gillian Humphreys ARAM LRAM

Registered Charity No. 1045967



**It was a chance remark from a child that inspired Gillian Humphreys to start the Concordia Foundation. She was preparing to sing at a BBC Opera Gala at the Royal Festival Hall, practising in her music studio, when she heard a little voice whisper**

**“Catherine, does your mother always shout like that?” Without even looking up, her daughter replied, “Oh, that’s singing – all mummies sing.”**

Inspired by that remark from her daughter’s friend sitting under the piano, a Young Audiences group was born. Gillian had seen a model for such a group in San Francisco and invited children to her house for music, drama and dance. It grew to sixty children eventually meeting in St Michael’s Church Hall in Turnham Green for six years.

Gillian’s first international venture was to Romania, taking her words and music programme, Shakespeare and Love, that subsequently led to performances in Romanian orphanages. That in turn led to the Cantorino children’s choir from Romania visiting Britain, and slowly as concerts and activities multiplied, a charitable Foundation emerged.

In the early days Gillian commissioned new children’s songs from Cecilia McDowall, gave concerts here and abroad, and took children on TV and onto the stage of the Royal Festival Hall. All this, whilst carrying on a very busy international career as singer and director of her own theatre company.

Wishing to balance her own professional work and seeing the need, she scaled back her own career to focus on encouraging and nurturing young artistic talent. The Foundation established concert series in London venues, developed its work abroad and ensured that the travelling Concordia artists gave workshops to local artists as well as performing in Concordia showcases. In more recent years, Concordia has developed its *Young Audiences* music and art projects for schools in East London with events at Wilton’s Music Hall.

The Concordia Foundation will present a number of special events this year that illustrate the work that has been developed over the past fifteen years building bridges through music and the arts. The Foundation’s current aims are:

**Concordia International Ensemble** - To initiate and develop exchange visits and educational links between the UK and other countries.

**Emerging Artists** - To encourage, support and provide platforms for new, emerging artists.

**Young Audiences** - To develop music and art educational programmes with school children in Tower Hamlets and present specially written children’s productions at Wilton’s Music Hall.

***In 2010, Concordia celebrates its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with at least fifty concert performances in London culminating in a Gala orchestral concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 22nd November.***

*For more information please contact:*

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**Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 7.30pm**  
**Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre**  
**“Bach to Bernstein”**  
**15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert**

Featured Concordia artists include James Cleverton, *baritone*, Satoko Fukuda, *violin*, Phuong Nguyen, *classical accordion*, Ahmed Dickinson, *classical guitar* and Gareth McLearnon, *flute*. They will be performing with other Foundation musicians; the Charities Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Michael Alexander Young, and also with pupils from the Yehudi Menuhin School (Lord Menuhin encouraged Humphreys to set up the charity and was it’s Founder Patron).

John Wilson has been associated with the Foundation for fifteen years. Now a highly acclaimed international conductor, he will conduct “Serenade to Music” at the Gala Concert.

[www.southbankcentre.co.uk](http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

# Highlights 1995 - 2010

## 1997

- The Foundation sponsored a concert tour for the Cantorino Children's Choir from Zalau, Romania and Gillian was invited to work with the Kuala Lumpur Symphony Orchestra which was the beginning of *Young Audiences*.

## 1998/1999

- Gillian recorded *Shakespeare and Love*, which was performed at The Shakespeare Globe Theatre in London and on an official tour of Romania. She gave *Young Audiences* workshops in orphanages in Romania and was invited to meet Mother Teresa in London, who endorsed the importance of the healing power of music.
- *Shakespeare and Love* and orchestral concerts were performed at Windsor Castle for the Windsor Festival along with a season at the Purcell Room in London.

## 2000

- Events in 2000 included two theatre companies touring the world with Cunard Seabourn giving gala concerts at British High Commissions in Sydney, Wellington and Hong Kong, and a highly successful production at the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington of *Patti Patti Patti*, Gillian's musical biography of the 19th century Queen of Song, Adelina Patti.
- Having promised seven years previously to present a western opera in Vietnam, in 2000 Concordia gave the opening performance at the newly renovated Opera House in Ho Chi Minh City with *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

## 2001

- A further world tour took place in 2001 and a successful charity concert was given in Sydney. Gillian launched the *Concordia Concerto Series* of concerts with the Vietnam National Symphony Orchestra in Hanoi in May. The *Association of English Singers and Speakers Concordia Song Prize* competition was held at the Purcell Room in June.

## 2002

- In December Concordia presented a candle-lit concert at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden and a *Stars at Christmas* Carol Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

## 2003

- The Concordia Theatre Company toured the Far East in 2003, the highlight being a performance of *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, directed by Jeff Clarke for the British Ambassador in Yangon, Myanmar. A gala banquet at the Tower of London with music from *The Yeomen of the*

*Guard* was held in June of that year. The *Association of English Singers and Speakers Concordia Song Prize* and lunchtime concerts took place at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden.

- *Love from Ivor*, a musical evening recalling the life and music of Ivor Novello, written for Concordia by Richard Stirling, was launched at the Grand Theatre, Blackpool in April. Further performances took place in Hastings, Worthing, Aldeburgh, National Portrait Gallery, Linbury Theatre, Covent Garden and aboard the QE2 world cruise.

## 2004

- A highlight this year was the production of *Winter in Majorca*, the life and music of Chopin and George Sand, presented in London at the National Portrait Gallery and in Majorca with French pianist Emmanuel Despax, directed by Richard Stirling.

## 2005

- The Concordia Foundation's tenth anniversary was celebrated with a Gala orchestral concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.
- In July Concordia International Ensemble was invited by the BBC to present *Peter and the Wolf* to open the Proms in Trafalgar Square.
- Having worked with Bernard Herrman (who wrote the music for Hitchcock movies) in California, Gillian hosted a seminar on *Music in Film* at the Off/On Film Festival in Warsaw. In September she adjudicated the Waterford International Festival of Light Opera.



- The Foundation was delighted to return to Vietnam in October with their production of *Pagliacci* at the Opera House in Hanoi, directed by Jeff Clarke.
- Concordia presented what was by now their annual Candlelit Christmas Concert, at St Paul's Church Covent Garden, and added *A Dickensian Christmas* to the festive programme at the National Portrait Gallery.

## 2006

- In June 2006 the Foundation presented a new project for children with a *Young Audiences* concert, which included selections from *Carnival of the Animals* and *Peter and the Wolf* for Eaton Square Schools at St Michael's, Chester Square.
- Concordia Tea Concerts were given at St Martin-in-the-Fields during August. *In Praise of Handel & Hawksmoor* was presented at St George's Bloomsbury in October with the Oxford Girls choir.
- *A Candlelit Winter Serenade* was presented at St Paul's Covent Garden and at the National Portrait Gallery, Gillian presented *A Winter Miscellany*.



## 2007

- In January 2007 Gillian was invited to present a Gala concert *The Still Voice Sings Within* at the Teatro dei Rossi, Siena. A revised version of this concert for world peace was performed in Switzerland in 2008 with members of the Concordia International Ensemble and a scenic artist illustrating the themes of the concert on a large canvas on stage behind the musicians.
- Concordia linked with Wilton's Music Hall to present *Concordia Young Audiences* concerts for schools in Tower Hamlets featuring international young musicians, actors and scenic artists. Performances of *A Journey to meet Peter and the Wolf* were given to children from seven schools at Wilton's Music Hall in Tower Hamlets and, at the invitation of George Fenton, the Foundation presented the programme again for children from local schools at The North Wall in Oxford.
- Gillian visited Warsaw as guest of the Polish Cultural Department, participating in the judging of international singers and musicians.
- In June Gillian was invited to give a voice and presentation Masterclass for an American T.V. series, *American Princess*, and in August she returned for the fourth year to adjudicate the international Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton, Derbyshire.
- In 2007 a series of Concordia monthly atrium concerts and ward visits at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital was established. Concordia musicians and artists also presented music and art workshops in the children's wards.

## 2008

- Concordia developed its educational work with *Young Audiences* in association with Wilton's Music Hall with art and music workshops for children in schools. In the autumn, *Young Audiences* presented *The Spotted Cow and the Pianoforte* at Wilton's, based on a Victorian children's story. Their next productions were *Street Cries of London* and *Around the World in 60 minutes* working with vocal ensemble Voces8.

## 2009

- In March the Concordia Foundation, with its objective of Building Bridges through Music and the Arts, visited Cuba. Workshops were presented to schools and academies. Performances of the *Still Voice Sings Within* introduced by Gillian were given at the Teatro Amadeo Roldan. Children at Shapla School, Tower Hamlets designed and presented a mural illustrating life in London and in exchange, the schools in Havana sent pictures depicting their lives in Cuba.

## 2010

- A link with the Worshipful Company of Musicians has been established supported by the Concordia Foundation Awards Trust. The first prizewinners' recital took place at the Wigmore Hall in January.
- In February, EDF Energy in association with Concordia, held a children's art competition to select paintings for ten windows on an EDF building off Brick Lane, London.



- In May, Concordia's overseas mission took them to Vietnam where they gave two performances of the Verdi Requiem at the Hanoi Opera House, conducted by Graham Sutcliffe MBE. The visiting performers gave masterclasses with Gillian at the Vietnam Opera and Ballet Theatre and gave a concert for the British Council.

# Concordia Artists Success Stories

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## **James Cleverton** *baritone*

### **Concordia Ambassador**

James has represented Concordia in Vietnam singing Silvio in *Pagliacci* and as a soloist in the Verdi Requiem. In Cuba he performed in concerts and masterclasses. He has regularly performed for Concordia in London's major concert halls.

**Now:** James has just completed singing the title role in Schweizer's opera *Jakob von Gunten* at the St Gallen Opera in Switzerland. In 2010 he makes his Royal Opera House debut as Grigorio in Gounod's *Romeo & Juliet* and in August 2010 James will also be making his Salzburg Festival debut in a production of Alban Berg's *Lulu*.

## **Colin Lee** *tenor*

### **Concordia Trustee**

'From Concordia to the Met' - Colin Lee has been associated with the Foundation since his first Concordia world tour in 1996.

**Now:** He is a Trustee of the Foundation. Colin, a greatly acclaimed tenor, appears worldwide in roles that include Rossini's Count Almaviva (Royal Opera, Opera-Bastille, Vienna State Opera, WNO, ENO), Argirio in *Tancredi* (Theatre an der Wien), Don Narciso in *Il Turco in Italia* (Royal Opera, Berlin State Opera), Arturo in *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Metropolitan Opera, New York), 2010 Royal Opera, Tonio in *La Fille de Regimen*; Rodrigo in *La Donna del lago (Paris Opéra)*. Colin returns to the Metropolitan Opera House, New York in 2011 to sing Count Almaviva.

## **Laura Mitchell** *soprano*

### **Winner of the Concordia Barthel Prize 2007 Concordia Ambassador**

As a Concordia Ambassador Laura appeared in *The Still Voice Sings Within* at the Teatro dei Rozzi, Siena and concerts at St Martin-in-the-Fields, St Paul's Church, Covent Garden, St James's Piccadilly and the Windsor Festival. She received bursaries from Concordia to study at the Royal College of Music and at the National Opera Studio.

**Now:** Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Song Prize in 2007. Laura has made recent appearances at

English Touring Opera and at Scottish Opera and sang Gilda in *Rigoletto* for Grange Park Opera rising stars series. She will be performing in the Gala Concert in November.

## **Puong Nguyen** *classical accordion*

### **Winner of the Concordia Barthel Prize 2003**

As one of the Vietnamese boat people, Puong was interned in Hong Kong for four years where his musical abilities were noted and was brought to England to study at the Royal Academy of Music. Puong had been involved with Concordia since his early days at the Academy and as a Concordia Ambassador has represented the Foundation in Vietnam, Switzerland and Italy. He received a Concordia travel scholarship, travelling the world on the QE2 and made his first visit to Hong Kong since his internment with Concordia in 2005. He was presenter at Concordia's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

**Now:** He has appeared with the SWF Symphony Orchestra of Baden-Baden at the Proms, Edinburgh and Salzburg Festivals, at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, and Royal Festival Hall, South Bank, London with guitarist Morgan Syzanski in a programme of Latin American Music.

## **John Wilson** *conductor*

### **Concordia Ambassador**

John has been associated with Concordia since 1995, appearing at St John's Smith Square and regularly at London South Bank with them.

**Now:** Conductor of *Ruddigore* for Opera North and achieved great success at the 2009 Proms. His 2010 BBC Prom will be *A celebration of Rogers and Hammerstein* with the John Wilson Orchestra. He is a regular guest conductor with the Hallé, City of Birmingham, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Philharmonia and BBC Symphony Orchestra. John is an Ambassador for Concordia and will be conducting the *Serenade to Music* at the Concordia 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Concert at the Queen Elizabeth Hall on 22nd November.

## What people say about Concordia

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'Music is our daily medicine. The Concordia Foundation focuses on the living art of making music to the highest possible level and it portrays the immense joy of sharing and communicating through sound. This charity is a real gem.'

*Dame Evelyn Glennie OBE*

'The work of Concordia Foundation highlights the huge value of music as the international language, cutting through all barriers and opening hearts and minds. I admire the vast energy that Gillian puts into achieving such professional performances with such admirable goals, giving young performers that vital first step into the concert business, and delighting audiences the world over with their talent.'

*Richard Hickox CBE*

'Gillian Humphreys captures the very essence of music making in her annual series of concerts. Young performers share the platform with established artists, and together they provide music making of a very high order which reaches out to audiences. Gillian and her fellow artists really do succeed in "building bridges through music and the arts." But don't take my word for it – come and enjoy this for yourselves!'

*Dame Janet Ritterman*

'Doctors can heal the body, but it is music that uplifts the spirit.'

*Mother Teresa  
to the Concordia Foundation*