

30 April 2010

Penny Woolcock directs a new production of Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*

The Pearl Fishers

Georges Bizet

Opens 1 June 2010 (11 performances)

Penny Woolcock returns to ENO to direct her second opera for the Company following the success of her debut, John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*, a co-production with the Metropolitan Opera. Rising star **Rory Macdonald** conducts Bizet's exciting and dramatic score after his success last season with *The Barber of Seville*. An excellent cast is led by one of Britain's best loved tenors **Alfie Boe**.

Penny Woolcock is both an award-winning writer/director who has worked extensively in documentary and drama on projects spanning television, film and opera. *Doctor Atomic* received critical acclaim and her previous collaboration with John Adams on the Channel 4 film version of *The Death of Klinghoffer* won her The Special Prize of the Jury at the Brussels European Film Awards. Other work includes the feature films *Margate Exodus*, *The Principles of Lust* and most recently *A Life of Grime*.

Penny Woolcock places the sea at the heart of the action. Set in the Far East the sea is a force that cannot be controlled: a fact which resonates strongly today as climate change and rising sea levels cause the regular destruction of villages across the Far East. The story revolves around two fishermen Nadir and Zurga, their love for the priestess Leila and their vow of friendship. What follows is a tale of sacrifice, jealousy, betrayal, love and its dramatic consequences. The famous friendship duet *Au fond du temple saine* is one of the most beloved in the opera repertoire.

Rory Macdonald conducts an exciting cast led by the critically acclaimed British tenor Alfie Boe as Nadir, the fisherman who is prepared to sacrifice everything for his love. He is joined by **Hanan Alattar** as Leila, **Quinn Kelsey** (performances 1-7 inclusive) and **Roland Wood** (performances 8-11 inclusive) sharing the role of **Zurga** and **Freddie Tong** as Nourabad.

Collaborating with Penny Woolcock is Set Designer **Dick Bird** making his ENO debut. His impressive repertoire of stage work both in the UK and abroad includes work for The Young Vic, the Globe Theatre, the National Theatre, The Rhine Opera and the English National Ballet. The creative team is completed with Costume Designer **Kevin Pollard**, Lighting Designer **Jennifer Schriever** and Movement Director **Andrew Dawson**.

The Pearl Fishers opens at the London Coliseum on 1 June for 11 performances – 1, 4, 10, 12, 22, 29 June & 1, 8 July at 7.30pm and 19, 26 June at 6.30pm and 4 July at 3pm.

Post-performance discussion with director Penny Woolcock: 4 July, London Coliseum, free

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