

# Peter Grimes

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)  
Montagu Slater after George Crabbe

Director, David Alden  
Conductor, Edward Gardner OBE

## David Alden's award-winning five-star production of *Peter Grimes* returns to English National Opera

*Opening Wednesday 29 January 2014, 7.00pm at London Coliseum (8 performances)*

David Alden's 2009 production of Benjamin Britten's searing psychological drama *Peter Grimes* returns to English National Opera following successful performances in Berlin, Antwerp, Ghent, Oviedo and at the BBC Proms 2012 in a semi-staged performance. Alden's production was hailed as a "superb company achievement" in 2009 with "Stuart Skelton's towering performance at its heart", (*The Guardian*) reaffirming ENO as the world's leading producer of Britten's operas. This hotly anticipated revival reunites director David Alden with ENO Music Director Edward Gardner and Australian heldentenor Stuart Skelton in the title role.

*Peter Grimes* is the most significant British opera in over two centuries and has long been associated with ENO, having received its premiere at Sadler's Wells Opera (now ENO) in 1945. This is the first revival of David Alden's 2009 five-star sell-out production which won the South Bank Show Award for Opera. Alden returns to ENO following his acclaimed production of Britten's *Billy Budd*, described by *The Independent* as "world class".

ENO's Music Director Edward Gardner rekindles his close association with Britten's work, having also conducted ENO productions of *Death in Venice* and David Alden's *Billy Budd*, for which he received an Olivier nomination for Outstanding Achievement in Opera.

Completing the creative team is Set Designer Paul Steinberg, Costume Designer Brigitte Reiffenstuel, Lighting Designer Adam Silverman and Movement Director Maxine Braham.

Stuart Skelton takes the title role once again giving his remarkable, multifaceted portrayal of the disturbed outsider. Skelton's 2009 performance in the role won unanimous praise from critics, who compared his portrayal of Grimes to that of Peter Pears, Philip Langridge and Jon Vickers. Skelton reprised the role for ENO at the BBC Proms 2012 in a performance that the *Sunday Express* described as "definitive". And in October 2013, Skelton sang *Peter Grimes* with the London

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Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Vladimir Jurowski in a “hauntingly believable” (*Daily Telegraph*) performance, “possibly the finest on the stage today” (*The Times*).

This much anticipated revival introduces two new major singers to the production. British baritone Iain Paterson sings Balstrode for the first time in a fully staged production following his outstanding performance at the BBC Proms in 2012 with ENO. The internationally celebrated South African soprano Elza Van den Heever makes her London operatic and role debut singing Ellen Orford. Van den Heever recently made her debut with New York’s Metropolitan Opera, singing the role of Elizabeth in Donizetti’s *Maria Stuarda*, described by the *New York Times* as “vocally burnished and emotionally tempestuous”.

The definitive Mrs Sedley is sung by Dame Felicity Palmer. Rebecca de Pont Davies (Auntie), Michael Colvin (Bob Boles), Matthew Best (Swallow) and Leigh Melrose (Ned Keene) also reprise their roles in this revival.

Showcasing the best of young British operatic talent, ENO Harewood Artists Rhian Lois and Mary Bevan take the roles of First and Second Niece, completing a cast of outstanding vocal strength for this spectacular revival.

*Peter Grimes* opens at the London Coliseum on 29 January 2014 for 8 performances – 29 January & 6, 14, 21, 27 February, 7pm, 1, 8 February, 6pm and 23 February, 3.00pm.

Pre-performance talk: Saturday 1 February, 4.15pm-5pm, £5/£2.50 concessions

A co-production with De Vlaamse Opera, Opera de Oviedo and Deutsche Oper Berlin

Original production supported by ENO’s English Opera Group.

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

**English National Opera (ENO)** is the UK’s leading producer of world-class opera, sung in English. Working with the very best talent from across the arts and creative industries, we produce highly theatrical productions that push the boundaries of what opera can be. We champion British and British-trained talent by providing development programmes for singers, composers and conductors, placing them at the heart of our performances. Our productions are seen by audiences across Europe, North America and Australia thanks to partnerships with the world’s most celebrated opera houses. Through all our activities we aim to make our work enjoyable, accessible and affordable for as many people as possible.

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