

HMS Pinafore

George Arthur Sullivan (1842 – 1900)

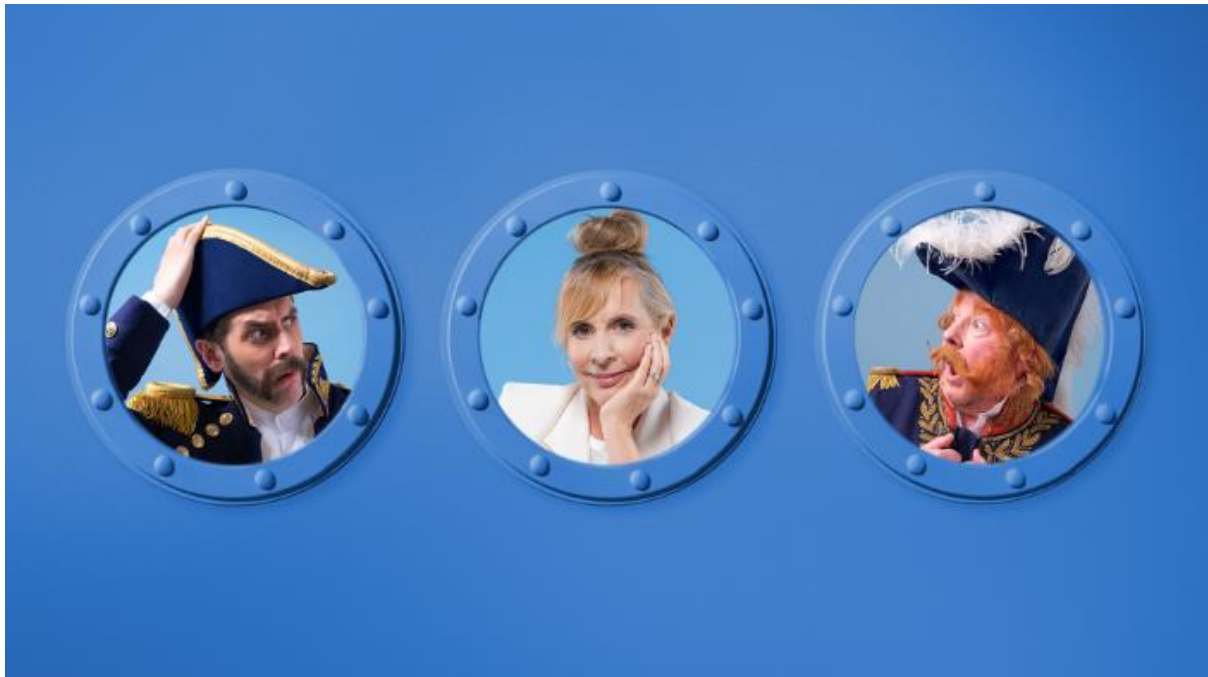
Libretto by W.S. Gilbert (1836 – 1911)

Director: Cal McCrystal

Conductor: Matthew Kofi Waldren

English National Opera's sparkling production of *HMS Pinafore* makes a welcome return with guest star Mel Giedroyc

4 Dec 2025 – 7 Feb 2026 at the London Coliseum (12 performances)



Under 21s can get [free opera tickets](#) to all ENO performances at every level of the theatre, and 21-35 year olds can get discounted tickets. Tickets for everyone begin at £15.

Past production images: <https://englishnationalopera.smugmug.com/HMS-Pinafore-2021/HMS-Pinafore>

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English National Opera (ENO)'s much-loved production of Gilbert and Sullivan's nautical love triangle-themed opera *HMS Pinafore* returns to the London Coliseum this winter for its first revival, with a major guest star headlining the cast: comedian, actor and presenter **Mel Giedroyc**.

Giedroyc commented: *'I'm so looking forward to getting stuck into rehearsals for my ENO debut in Gilbert and Sullivan's HMS Pinafore, and to working with the fantastic operatic talent in this hilarious production. It's going to be a riot!'*

ENO Press Office: mediaenquiries@eno.org



Directed by acclaimed comedy director **Cal McCrystal** and with set and costumes designed by **takis**, the production was nominated for an Olivier Award following its premiere in 2021 for Set and Costume Design in the Outstanding Achievement in Opera category. The action of the opera is set aboard the eponymous Royal Navy warship – though the ship never actually leaves Portsmouth. Critics praised McCrystal's production as 'pure unadulterated fun' (Seen and Heard International), 'an endlessly mischievous staging... joyous' (The Times) and 'elegant, buoyant and witty' (The Guardian).

Gilbert and Sullivan's comedic classic is known for its rollicking humour and sharp social satire, which pokes fun at the British class system. Also known as *The Lass That Loved a Sailor*, *HMS Pinafore* premiered in London in 1878 and became Gilbert and Sullivan's first major international success, running for 571 performances. It remains one of the duo's most popular operas and includes some of the most popular operatic music in the world, which has featured in popular TV shows like *The Simpsons* and *The West Wing*.

Acclaimed Irish director **Cal McCrystal**, previously been named by *The Telegraph* as 'the king of physical comedy', returns to the ENO to direct the production's first outing since its 2021 premiere. McCrystal directed 2018's *Iolanthe* for ENO, one of the opera house's most popular productions of all time and 'an all-round, knockout success' (Financial Times). The mastermind behind some of the most celebrated comic scenes in modern theatre and film (including *One Man, Two Guvnors* and *Paddington*), he lends his trademark slapstick humour to Gilbert and Sullivan's farcical satire.

Taking up the baton and leading the award-winning Orchestra and Chorus of the ENO is conductor **Matthew Kofi Waldren**, former Mackerras Conducting Fellow and International Opera Awards (2017) nominee, who previously conducted ENO's Olivier Award-nominated production of *Blue*.

Mel Giedroyc leads multi-talented cast bringing Pinafore's absurd characters to life. The former *Great British Bake Off* host and national treasure will make her ENO debut in an acting role, lending her trademark comic timing and warm wit to the production.

TV presenter, writer and actress Giedroyc is best-known for her work alongside Sue Perkins. She has been a regular presenter for BBC's *Children In Need* and *Eurovision*, and also hosts the comedy panel show *Unforgivable* for BBC Two and *Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker* for Channel 4. She comes fresh from the Bristol Old Vic stage, where she has been appearing in the new musical *Starter for Ten*. She can be heard on Magic Radio's *Sunday Request* and on her podcast with Sue Perkins, *Mel & Sue: Should Know By Now* (Audible).

Following his success in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *Così fan tutte* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, award-winning British bass-baritone **Neal Davies** returns to ENO to play the Rt. Hon Sir Joseph Porter, the First Lord of the Admiralty, intended to marry Captain Corcoran's daughter Josephine.

Neal is joined on board by ENO favourite and Gilbert and Sullivan specialist **John Savournin**, who reprises the role of Captain Corcoran, having also appeared in the 2021 premiere. Himself a distinguished director (including for Opera Holland Park, Opera North and the Royal Opera House), bass-baritone Savournin has previously sung in ENO productions *La bohème: Drive & Live* and *Iolanthe* (the latter directed by Cal McCrystal).



Starring as the Captain's daughter Josephine, a romantic torn between duty and love, is ENO Harewood Artist **Henna Mun**, in her principal role debut for ENO. Described as having a voice that is 'richly expressive and gleaming' (Opera Magazine) and 'show-stopping' (The Observer), the South Korean soprano was the winner of Glyndebourne's 2024 John Christie Award and the 2025 Clonter Award.

Singing the role of Josephine in the 24, 29 and 31 January matinee performances of this run is up-and-coming soprano **Eleanor Sanderson-Nash**. She makes her ENO debut, having previously covered the role of Phyllis in *Iolanthe*.

Completing the love triangle is lowly deckhand Ralph Rackstraw, played by **Thomas Atkins**, fresh from his successful performance as Nemorino in ENO's 2024 production of *The Elixir of Love*. A graduate of the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House, the New Zealand tenor is fast becoming a sought-after artist on the international scene, praised for his 'tenorial heroism' (Opera Magazine).

Singing the role of cynical shipmate Dick Deadeye is Canadian bass **Trevor Eliot Bowes**, an ENO regular who has previously appeared in productions including *The Merry Widow*, *La bohème: Drive & Live*, *Paul Bunyan*, *Salome*, *Rigoletto* and *The Girl of the Golden West*.

Joining them on the Coliseum stage as Buttercup, a dockside vendor, is New Zealand contralto **Rhonda Browne**, who has sung in the UK and internationally, including at the Royal Opera House.

Reprising her role as Sir Joseph's cousin Hebe is mezzo-soprano **Bethan Langford**, a former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, baritone **Marcus Farnsworth** (previously for ENO: *Iolanthe* and *Billy Budd*) as the Boatswain and bass-baritone **Nicholas Crawley** as the Carpenter.

Set and costume design for *HMS Pinafore* is by Olivier Award nominee **takis** and sound design is by **Dominic Bilkey**. **Tim Mitchell** is the production's Lighting Designer, with **Ian Jackson-French** as the Revival Lighting Designer. **Lizzi Gee** is the Choreographer and **Spencer Darlaston-Jones**, who also appears on stage as a dancer and in a non-singing acting role, is the Associate Choreographer.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

HMS Pinafore opens on Thursday 4 December for 12 performances at the London Coliseum: Dec 4, Jan 23, 24, 29, 31, Feb 4, 5 at 19.30. Dec 5, Jan 24, 31, Feb 7 at 15.00. Jan 29 at 14.00.

BSL Interpreted Performance: Saturday, 31 January, 15.00.

Relaxed Performance: Thursday 29 January 2026, 14.00.

Performed in English, with surtitles projected above the stage.

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PRESS RELEASE



Tickets start from £15 (including all fees).

Website: www.eno.org

Mel Giedroyc headshot & artwork: <https://englishnationalopera.smugmug.com/HMS-Pinafore-2025/Mel-Giedroyc>

For more information or interview requests please contact the ENO Press Office on mediaenquiries@eno.org.

#ENOPinafore

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English National Opera is the national opera company dedicated to creating extraordinary encounters with opera, on stage and beyond. We sing in English to be accessible to the widest possible audience, as well as offering free tickets for under 21s, extended discounts for under 35s, and for as little as £15 for everyone else.

We create opera that feels different, theatrical and creatively daring and have been doing this to an internationally recognised standard since being founded in 1931 as Sadler's Wells Opera. In November 2024, following an agreement with Arts Council England, ENO and Greater Manchester announced details of a new partnership to bring the company's globally renowned cultural offering to the city-region, whilst continuing its substantial opera season every year at the London Coliseum.

We are passionate about making opera more inclusive and representative of the society in which we live, and believe that positive change for the industry comes from removing barriers to access.

English National Opera, creating opera without limits.

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