

EMBARGOED UNTIL: 17 November 2025, 5am

ENO LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL SEARCH FOR NEXT MACKERRAS FELLOW AS PART OF CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

English National Opera (ENO) today celebrates the centenary of the birth of **Sir Charles Mackerras** by opening applications for the next **ENO Mackerras Fellowship** – the first to take place under the company’s new Music Director Designate, **André de Ridder**.

ENO has launched an international search for an outstanding emerging conductor to join the company as the next Mackerras Fellow. The two-year Fellowship offers the successful candidate the chance to work closely with the ENO, gaining hands-on experience across rehearsals, productions and performances at the **London Coliseum and Greater Manchester**.

Established in honour of Sir Charles Mackerras’s remarkable legacy, the Fellowship has become a cornerstone of ENO’s artist development work, supporting and inspiring a new generation of conductors. To date, six Mackerras Fellows have been appointed, including **Olivia Clarke, Matthew Kofi Waldren, Fergus Macleod, Gergely Madaras, Valentina Peleggi** and **Toby Purser**, many of whom have gone on to establish significant international careers.

Sir Charles Mackerras’s pioneering work and his deep association with ENO – where he served as Music Director from 1970 to 1977 – helped define the opera company’s reputation for musical excellence and innovation. He is renowned for conducting Gilbert & Sullivan operas and for introducing the music of Leoš Janáček to international audiences, two strands which remain central to ENO’s repertoire.

As ENO marks 100 years since his birth, this new Fellowship opening continues a commitment to nurturing the next generation of operatic talent.

André de Ridder, Music Director Designate, English National Opera, said: *“Sir Charles Mackerras remains one of the great figures in ENO’s history, and it’s an honour to continue his legacy by launching the first Mackerras Fellowship of my tenure. I had the privilege of meeting Sir Charles during my studies at the Royal Academy of Music where he gave masterclasses which had quite an impact on my own practice and thinking in music, and as a conductor.*

“Through an international search, we look forward to discovering an exceptional emerging conductor who will work alongside me and grow and learn at the level of artistic excellence required for this extraordinary opera company.”

Jenny Mollica, CEO, English National Opera, said: *“The Mackerras Fellowship is a vital part of ENO’s commitment to talent development and to the future of opera as a vibrant and daring artform. As we celebrate Sir Charles’s centenary, we’re proud to honour his spirit of mentorship and excellence through this opportunity for the next generation of conductors.”*

Applications for the Mackerras Fellowship (2026–2028) open today and close on Monday 20 January 2026. Full details and application guidelines are available at [Careers - ENO](#).

The Mackerras Fellowship is supported by the Philip Loubser Foundation.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Photos available to download here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/tj4voaflmwlah84t8749s/AA94L3yWhmfPZTMFbIPQswY?rlkey=yzx6fekgsromz3kyeec7r8jwp&st=cesnifgr&dl=0>

For interviews, please contact the ENO Press Office: mediaenquiries@eno.org

Website: www.eno.org

Sir Charles Mackerras was born in New York and grew up in Australia before coming to London in 1948. He inspired universal affection and was known for his exacting musical standards, musicianship and conducting. He championed the use of traditional period instruments inspiring a new musical movement. Sir Charles' musical philosophy was straightforward: be true to the composer's wishes while being aware of the latest musicological research – an attitude he applied to every work he conducted. He found clarity and the essence of the music he conducted from Gilbert & Sullivan (which he first performed at school) to Mozart, Bach, Martinu and Donizetti.

As well as his transformative impact as Music Director at ENO, Sir Charles is also known for his work with Welsh National Opera and Sydney Symphony Orchestra. In 1980, he was the first non-British conductor to conduct the Last Night of the Proms.

Sir Charles Mackerras joined Sadler's Wells Opera (now English National Opera) as Assistant Conductor in 1948, beginning a lifelong association with the Company. He was Music Director from 1970 to 1977 and continued conducting with ENO until the end of his life.

His greatest legacy was introducing the music of Leoš Janáček to international audiences. Having studied in Prague, Mackerras brought his passion for Janáček to London, conducting UK premieres including *Katya Kabanova* (1951), *The Makropulos Case* (1964), *From the House of the Dead* (1965, London premiere), and *The Adventures of Mr Brouček* (1978). Thanks to Sir Charles, Janáček's operas remain a key part of ENO's repertoire.

Mackerras also revitalised interest in Handel, with landmark productions such as *Julius Caesar* (John Copley) and *Xerxes* (Nicholas Hytner), featuring Dame Janet Baker, Valerie Masterson, Ann Murray, and Sir John Tomlinson. These groundbreaking performances proved Handel's operas could thrive both dramatically and musically - another legacy that endures at ENO.

About English National Opera (ENO):

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.

The Philip Loubser Foundation (PLF) was founded in The Netherlands in 1997 by Michael Loubser. Named in honour of his father who died in 1984. The objective of the Foundation is to support six Fellowships for Ballet, Opera, Music and Theatre and grow a community of Fellows.

In partnership with major Cultural Institutions, the Foundation participates in the career development of exceptional talent from across the arts spectrum. Its Fellowships are unique and prestigious, each commemorating a great artist, and each awarded by the Partnership Institutions. Recipients range from young emerging talents to mature established artists.

The scope of the Foundation is international. Fellows are from Mexico, Hungary, USA, UK, Ukraine, South Korea, China, Russia, Norway, India, Serbia, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Brazil, and Ireland.

Each summer this family of past and incumbent Fellows meet at a Gathering where creative ideas are discussed, and experiences shared. Previous guest speakers include Ivo van Hove, Edward Gardner and Janis Susskind. The PLF Gathering is a highlight of the calendar. A cross-disciplinary powerhouse.

The PLF has also launched a Signature Fund. A fund to provide support to Fellows who wish to embark on an approved career-enhancing project.

To find out more, visit www.philiploubserfoundation.org/ and www.plfprojects.com/

The ENO Mackerras Fellowship commenced in 2012 under the mentorship of Edward Gardner with Gergely Madaras as inaugural Fellow. Since 2012 there have been a six Mackerras Fellows at English National Opera.