

**André de Ridder and Danielle de Niese lead ENO's new production of  
Kurt Weill & Bertolt Brecht's  
*Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny***

**16 – 20 February 2026 at the London Coliseum (3 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.*

**André de Ridder** will undertake his debut conducting engagement as ENO's Music Director Designate this February, in a powerful new production of Kurt Weill & Bertolt Brecht's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. The acclaimed conductor will take on this rarely performed political satire, known for its powerful depiction of hedonism and consumerist excess. The production will be directed by **Jamie Manton**, with a distinguished cast including internationally renowned soprano **Danielle de Niese** and mezzo soprano **Rosie Aldridge**.

A collaboration between composer **Kurt Weill** and playwright **Bertolt Brecht**, *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* can be interpreted as a critique of both American capitalism and the excesses

of the Weimar Republic. Brecht's satirical lyrics are matched by Weill's electric score, which fuses classical opera with popular 1920s styles of jazz, cabaret and ragtime. It features the Alabama Song, which has transcended its origins – going on to be recorded by artists from David Bowie to The Doors – testament to the opera's remarkable accessibility and its ability to resonate with audiences.

The opera premiered in Leipzig in 1930 to controversy but found huge success in Berlin later that year. Banned during in the era of Nazi Germany, it went on to become a 20th-century classic, with international stagings including its celebrated UK debut at Sadler's Wells Opera (which later became English National Opera) in 1963, and a famed Met Opera run in New York in 1979.

**André de Ridder** has been hailed as 'one of the world's most daring conductors' by The Wall Street Journal and a 'livewire conductor' by The Times. In May 2025, he was appointed Music Director Designate of ENO, a role he will take up fully in Autumn 2027. Praised for his stylistic versatility and bold interpretations of both new works and established repertoire, he pushes the boundaries of music genre, working across opera and orchestral music, jazz and electronics, avant-garde experiments and indie pop (notably conducting the world premiere of Damon Albarn's and Chen Shi-Zheng's animated *Monkey: Journey to the West* at the 2017 Manchester International Festival).

Acclaimed director **Jamie Manton** made his ENO main stage directing debut in 2022 with Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, which Broadway World called 'fresh and vital'. Prior to that, he directed Britten's *Paul Bunyan* for ENO Studio Live, which opened at Wilton's Music Hall in 2018 and went on to appear at the Alexandra Place Theatre. Both productions were nominated for Olivier Awards in the Outstanding Achievement in Opera category. The Stage has called him 'one of the most talented of the youngest generation of opera directors'.

Leading the distinguished cast in the role of sex worker Jenny Smith is the international soprano **Danielle de Niese**. Hailed by New York Times Magazine as 'opera's coolest soprano', de Niese has gained wide recognition for her multi-faceted career encompassing opera and concert performances with work in musical theatre, TV, and as a recording artist. She appeared most recently for ENO in 2022 as guardian angel Clara in Jake Heggie's acclaimed production of *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Singing the roles of the three fugitives are Rosie Aldridge, Kenneth Kellogg, and Mark Le Brocq. Acclaimed mezzo soprano **Rosie Aldridge** stars as Leokadja Begbick, fresh from her appearance in the Royal Opera House's smash-hit world premiere of Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Festen*, directed

by Richard Jones, in which her performance as Else was 'spectacular' (The Arts Desk). She performs regularly with leading opera houses around the world, and has appeared in several previous ENO productions including *Die Zauberflöte* and *Hänsel and Gretel*.

Joining her as Trinity Moses is American bass **Kenneth Kellogg**, also making a welcome return to the London Coliseum. Praised for his commanding stage presence, Kellogg made his ENO debut in 2023 in Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's opera *Blue*, singing The Father, a role specifically created for him. The Guardian hailed his 'blazing central performance' in the portrait of contemporary African American life: 'wonderfully sung and acted with passionate conviction'.

Completing the trio of criminals as Fatty the Bookkeeper is distinguished tenor and ENO regular **Mark Le Brocq**. He has performed in several previous ENO productions including *Die Zauberflöte*, *Salome*, *The Barber of Seville* and *Don Giovanni*. His singing has been praised as 'robust' (Bachtrack), with Seen and Heard International praising his 'energetic virtuosity'.

They will be joined by New Zealand-born tenor **Simon O'Neill** as Jimmy MacIntyre, the cash-strapped lumberjack who falls in love with Jenny Smith. O'Neill has won international recognition as a leading heldentenor, a rare breed of powerful, heroic tenor voice suited to German romantic opera, especially Wagner. He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2017 and makes his ENO and role debut here.

Two former ENO Harewood Artists and Emerging Artists at Scottish Opera join the cast: Jimmy's unfortunate friend Jack O'Brian will be performed by tenor **Elgan Llŷr Thomas**, and singing the role of Bank-Account Billy is baritone **Alex Otterburn**. Otterburn has appeared previously in ENO productions including *Mary, Queen of Scots*, *Peter Grimes* and *It's a Wonderful Life*.

Completing the quartet of lumberjacks who arrive in the hedonistic city of Mahagonny in pursuit of pleasure is **David Shipley** as Alaska Wolf Joe. The British bass, who makes his ENO debut here, is a graduate of the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme.

Singing the role of Toby Higgins is South African tenor **Zwakalele Tshabalala**. Another former ENO Harewood Artist, his roles for ENO have included The Son in Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue*, and appearances in *The Handmaid's Tale* and *It's a Wonderful Life*.

The cast will be joined on stage by the Chorus of ENO, and the Orchestra of ENO will perform the iconic score.

The production is designed by **Milla Clarke**, with Lighting Design by **D.M. Wood**. **Lizzi Gee** is

the choreographer, with **Spencer Darlaston-Jones** as Associate Choreographer. The translation is by **Jeremy Sams**.

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

#### ***Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny***

Composer: Kurt Weill

Librettist: Bertolt Brecht

Director: Jamie Manton

Conductor: André de Ridder

*Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* opens on Monday 16 February for 3 performances at the London Coliseum: February 16, 18 and 20 at 19.30.

Performed in English, with surtitles projected above the stage.

Tickets start from £15 (including all fees).

**Artwork:** <https://englishnationalopera.smugmug.com/202526-Season-/202526-Season-Artwork>

Password: 2526

For more information or interview requests please contact the ENO Press Office on [mediaenquiries@eno.org](mailto:mediaenquiries@eno.org).

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#ENOMahagonny

### **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.

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