

THE BLUE HOUR

In 1930, two young revolutionaries burst onto the Berlin music scene with their satirical opera, *The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. It was a smash, capturing the febrile essence of the fragile Weimar Republic. The collaboration between composer Kurt Weill and playwright and theatre director Bertolt Brecht heralded a brief musical golden age at a time of impending darkness, when artists in underground nightclubs dissected the political maelstrom in the streets above.

The Blue Hour reimagines their legacy in bold, contemporary colours, along with decadent masterpieces of the era, including ‘Surabaya Johnny’ and Marlene Dietrich’s huge hit, ‘Falling in Love Again’, all arranged by award-winning composer Tim Sutton.

Between them, **Sarah Gabriel** (vocals), **Tim Sutton** (pianist and arranger), **Gabriella Swallow** (cello), and **Beth Higham-Edwards** (percussion) have performed at the National Theatre, RSC, Young Vic, Southbank Centre, Théâtre du Châtelet, Wigmore Hall, Cheltenham Festival, Shakespeare’s Globe and on tour with Rob Brydon, Hugh Jackman and Bryan Ferry. Following their triumphant sell-out debut at the legendary Soho venue, Crazy Coqs, they come to the Old House Barn on Sunday 6th December to celebrate this vibrant, witty, subversive, sexy and provocative music of the Berlin cabaret.

“The springwater vocals of Sarah Gabriel” *The Guardian*

“Sarah Gabriel: as fine an actor as she is a singer” *Le Monde*

Short biographies

Sarah Gabriel

Described by Le Monde as ‘as fine an actor as she is a singer’ and praised by The Guardian for her ‘springwater vocals’, soprano Sarah Gabriel has explored her fascination with Berlin Cabaret and music of the Weimar era with pianist Joanna MacGregor and composer-arrangers Iain Farrington and Joseph Atkins at venues across the UK, including Kings Place, London and The Sage, Gateshead.

Her collaborations with composer and pianist Tim Sutton include *Brecht’s Threepenny Bits* at the Soho Theatre, London and *The Blue Hour*, their new project exploring the work of Brecht & Weill and their compatriots.

Sarah has sung music spanning 300 years at Wigmore Hall, Cheltenham and Dartington International Festivals, across Europe and the USA. She has broadcast for BBC Radio 2, 3, 4 and 6, NPR (USA), RTÉ, France Musique, and Radio France. She made her US debut as Lucy Lockit in Britten’s *The Beggar’s Opera*, conducted by Lorin Maazel, and her European debut as Eliza Doolittle in Robert Carsen’s triumphant production of *My Fair Lady* at Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, opposite Alex Jennings as Higgins. Her latest feature film as an actor is Giovanni Maderna’s *The Walk*, filmed in Rome in September 2020.

Tim Sutton

As composer and musical director, Tim Sutton has worked extensively with the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Young Vic and other major theatre companies. Recent work includes *The Cherry Orchard* (Central School of Speech and Drama), *The Omission of the Family Coleman* (Ustinov), *Pericles*, *As You Like It* and *Titus Andronicus* (RSC), *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom* (National Theatre), and Alexei Sayle’s *Imaginary Sandwich Bar Series 1, 2 & 3* (BBC Radio 4).

Gabriella Swallow

Cellist Gabriella Swallow is a London-based performer who has quickly become known as one of the most versatile and exciting cellists of her generation. She has performed with some of the world's most respected orchestras and musicians, and her dynamic and expressive style has captivated audiences across the globe.

Alongside her classical work she is a sought-after collaborator for singers and actors. She has been fortunate to work with UK Jazz and cabaret stars including Ian Shaw, Barb Jungr, Liane Carroll. Since 2007 she has been a member of singer-songwriter Judith Owen's band who from 2016 toured America and Europe with Bryan Ferry. In 2019 her string quartet ShowStrings toured Europe with Hugh Jackman on his *Greatest Show* tour and in 2020 she joined Rob Brydon on his national tour of *A Night of Songs and Laughter*.

Beth Higham-Edwards

Beth is a percussionist who works in theatre and contemporary music. Her recent projects include *Inala* (West End and international tour 2019), *Amadeus* and *Common* at The National Theatre (2016-18) and *Othello* (2018) and *Henry V* (dep 2019) at Shakespeare's Globe. Beth collaborated with director Tom Hughes to create *Daughters of the Sun* in 2018 for which she composed the music, acted and played percussion/keys, and helped create the script.

Beth has worked as a session artist for mercury prize winning Alt J (Infectious Music), composers Charlotte Harding (Nonclassical) and Cheryl Frances-Hoad (Champs Hill Records) and has performed with Grammy nominated Bring me the Horizon, Alter Bridge, and folk singer Fionn Regan. She is a founding member of the all-female percussion group *Beaten Track Ensemble* where she performed to critical acclaim in the Tate Modern's Alexander Calder exhibition *Performing Sculpture* and recently at the

Wigmore Hall. She appeared on BBC Radio 3 *In Tune* and *Music Matters* with the group.