



JESSICA WALKER – singer/writer



Singer/ writer Jessica Walker is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

2017/18 projects include her play ***All I Want is One Night*** at Wilton's Music Hall, the Hope Mill theatre and Brits off Broadway New York, an accompanying CD of French cabaret songs, ***All I Want is One Night – death and desire at the French cabaret*** (Chrome Media), a

residency at Snape Maltings for ***Witches Three*** (her new music theatre piece currently in development), a new commission to commemorate the end of WW1 for Opera North, a recording of WW1 songs for ***Enter the Peace Broker*** (Chrome Radio), and the UK premiere of Sarah Kirkland Snider's ***Penelope*** for Psappha. She will also be an artist-in-residence at the 2018 Lichfield Festival, with further cabaret appearances at ***Live at Zedel***, the Royal Exchange Theatre, the Roman River Festival, Nottingham Theatre Royal and Hargrave Music Festival.

Alongside her busy career as both a cabaret artist and opera singer, Jessica has been devising, performing writing and creating new work, both alone and in collaboration with others, since 2010. Her first show - ***The Girl I Left Behind Me***, a solo piece devised by her and director Neil Bartlett - was commissioned by Opera North projects. Such was the critical acclaim for the piece that Jessica has been in great demand as writer/performer ever since. ***The Girl I Left Behind Me*** has been released as both a recording (in 2014 on the Original Cast Recordings label) and as a play script (Oberon Press), with performances across the UK (including the Purcell Room, Howard Assembly Rooms, Sage Gateshead, Brighton Theatre Royal, Aldeburgh Festival, Coutts Arts Festival, Buxton Festival, Lowry Salford Quays and Norfolk and Norwich Festival, plus a residency at the Barbican Pit), also enjoying a 3-week sell-out run at the 2013 Festival at the 59E59 Theatre in New York.

Her next solo show, ***Pat Kirkwood is Angry***, originally co-produced by Opera North in association with Royal Exchange Theatre, began life at the Manchester Royal Exchange studio and the Howard Assembly Rooms in October 2012, and has toured extensively with performances at the St James Theatre, London, the Grassington Festival, the Richard Burton Theatre, Cardiff and the main stage of the Royal Exchange. In June 2014, it went to the ***Brits off Broadway*** Festival for a three-week run, in which it was Charles Isherwood's critics pick of the week in the *New York Times*.

Other recent projects include ***All I Want is One Night*** for the Royal Exchange Theatre Manchester, ***The Rattler*** for Mahogany Opera Group, ***Mercy and Grand*** - the Tom



Waits project at the Adelaide Festival with Gavin Bryars, ***Unborn in America***, by Luke Styles and Peter Cant at The Vaults Festival, further performances of ***Pat Kirkwood is Angry*** at the St James Theatre Studio, and the singer in Caryl Churchill's ***The Skriker*** with RET and MIF, recorded for BBC Radio 3.

Her extensive list of stage roles includes **Gwendolen** in Gerald Barry's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (NI Opera), **Nurse/Harriet** *Sunday in the Park with George* (Théâtre du Châtelet), **Nerone** *The Coronation of Poppea* in a new version translated and directed by Mark Ravenhill (with jazz arrangements by Alex Silverman), *Gloria, A Pig Tale* by HK Gruber with The Opera Group, **Gloria** in Weill's *One Touch of Venus* (Opera North), **The Little Arab** in Martinu's *Julietta* (Opera North at the Ravenna Festival), **Gigi** *School for Lovers* (Glyndebourne and Finnish National Opera), **Peep Bo** *The Mikado* (Nationale Reis Opera, Holland), **Ninfa** in Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (Opera North), **Tamiri** in Mozart's *Il Re Pastore* (Musiektheater Transparant), **Messenger** and **Proserpina** *Orfeo* (The Opera Group), and **Cherubino** *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Stanley Hall).

Her cabaret opera - ***An Eye for an Eye*** - written with composer David Knotts – premiered to critical acclaim at both the Bath and St Magnus Festivals in 2013. Her recent **cabaret engagements** have included ***Love is a Drag*** at Grassington Festival, ***Peace Cabaret*** at Lichfield Festival, ***Songs for Paris*** and ***L'Amour et La Mort*** at Live at Zedel, ***Forbidden Love*** at Omnibus theatre, all with Joseph Atkins; ***Brel, Brassens and Barbara*** at the Bath International Music Festival with Alasdair Nicolson, and ***Recession Songs*** and ***Songs from the Left Bank*** - with Jim Holmes at the Howard Assembly Rooms, Opera North. Other concert engagements include Ligeti's ***Aventures - Nouvelles Aventures*** and the world premiere of Joanna Lee's song cycle, ***Elephant Woman***, both with Psappa. She toured ***Mercy and Grand: the Tom Waits Project*** with Opera North throughout the UK and in Milan (a CD of which has been released on the Gavin Bryars label, GB). A CD from Jessica's previous concert tour - ***A Quiet Girl: songs of love and other disasters*** - is available on the Avid label.

As a performer/deviser, Jessica recently completed a major collaboration - **OPENCOV** - between Opera North, Leeds University, Bregenz Festival and the Shanghai Theatre Academy, exploring links and differences between Chinese and Western operatic traditions, and culminating in workshop performances in Shanghai, Bregenz and Leeds.

Jessica has recently been awarded her PhD with commendation from Leeds University, with the support of a bursary from the School of PCI. Her practice-led research explored 'The Singer-actor as Creator and Collaborator: a performer-led model for new music theatre works.' See the Dr Jessica Walker page on her personal website for more details.