

Scottish tenor Nicky Spence to perform at Marchmont House this week

Scottish opera star Nicky Spence, one of the UK's most exciting tenors, will appear in an up-close and intimate evening of song in the Arts and Crafts Music Room at Marchmont House on Friday 20 May.

This concert presented by Samling Institute for Young Artists draws on the house's rich musical associations from past and present to include music by composers who have visited the house.

This year marks Ralph Vaughan Williams' 150th anniversary, and a highlight of the programme will be Nicky Spence singing his setting of A.E. Housman poems *On Wenlock Edge*. Spence's brand new recording of the cycle, released in April 2022, is being described by critics as one of the 'finest ever' for 'its thrilling assurance, strength of imagination and rapt instinct' (Gramophone Magazine) and that his 'gift for combining pure tone with direct, daring expression makes this a covetable disc' (The Guardian). Ralph Vaughan Williams was a frequent guest at Marchmont as a friend of owner Robert Finnie McEwan, along with another great British composer Sir Charles Villiers Stanford whose music also features in this recital of song in English.

Highly in demand, Nicky Spence is equally at home as a

recitalist and on the operatic stage. He recently appeared as Siegmund in English National Opera's production of *The Valkyrie* and in The Royal Opera House's Olivier Award winning production of Janáček's *Jenůfa* and will perform at this year's BBC Proms. He has also appeared at The Metropolitan Opera, New York, the Opéra national de Paris and La Monnaie and next year will make his debut at the Deutsche Staatsoper, Berlin. He is also passionate about supporting musicians at all levels, and recently appeared on the Sky Arts TV programme 'Anyone can sing' as a coach and mentor.

When Nicky was just starting out in 2006, he was selected to take part in the prestigious Samling Artist Programme for early-career singers and pianists. Since 2021, this intensive residential coaching programme has been held at Marchmont House, and Nicky is joined by a recent alumna, rising star soprano Haegge Lee who attended the programme last year and who will be appearing at The Royal Opera House this season in Mozart *Die Zauberflöte*. They will be accompanied by another illustrious Scottish artist Malcolm Martineau, widely recognised as one of the world's greatest pianists. He is also making a welcome return to Marchmont having led the Samling Artist Programme in November 2021, when he worked with eight early-career singers and pianists, including Haegge Lee.

Composer Jonathan Dove, renowned for his operas and vocal music, visited Marchmont in July 2021 to work with the Samling Artist Programme. His spirited and tender duet cycle *Man, Woman, Child* sets texts by the Australian poet Judith Wright and tells a story of love, healing and new life. It was commissioned by Samling Institute for Young Artists in 2021 to celebrate the charity's 25th anniversary and this performance will be the cycle's Scottish premiere.

Lucy Brown, MD of the Marchmont Makers Foundation, said: "Ralph Vaughan Williams and Charles Villiers Stanford both knew and loved the Music Room. It's wonderful to be bringing their music back to Marchmont – and to be doing it in such

magnificent style, with performers of the calibre of Nicky Spence and the pianist Malcolm Martineau. We very much look forward to welcoming people to share this revival of our remarkable musical tradition.”

samling.org.uk/events/man-woman-child-marchmont/



Nicky Spence