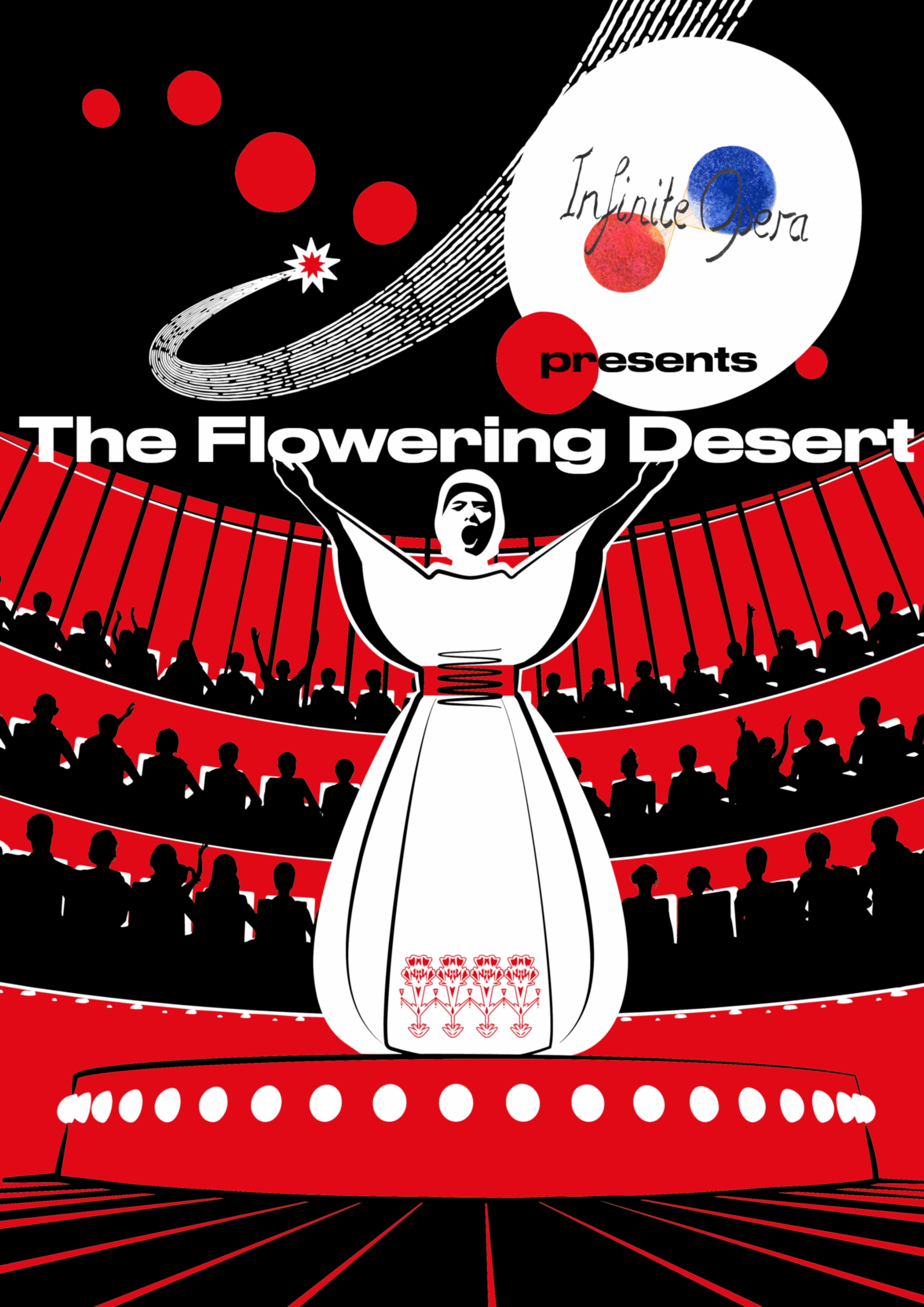


Infinite Opera

presents

The Flowering Desert



WELCOME

Infinite Opera is thrilled to present you an opera about astrophysics and the search for life created specifically for planetariums.

The Flowering Desert is a surround sound immersive experience, with a tailor-made music of the spheres, which puts the audience inside the mind of a scientist and the recently discovered TRAPPIST-1 solar system, exploring the border between fact and imagination. With live performers, stunning projections, and celestial music this will be a beautiful night with the stars.

Infinite Opera

Art and science, two different facets of the same question, finding out what we are and who we are.

Dr. Amaury Triaud.

Première - 18th and 20th of May 2022 Thinktank Planetarium, Birmingham

Creative Team at the première

Produced by Infinite Opera

Music by Daniel Blanco Albert

Libretto by Roxanne Korda

Projections by Leon Trimble

Planetarium lead - Colin Hutcheson

Movement Direction and Costumes by Alexander Kaniewski

Designs by Amy Bradley, Niambi Robinson and Yuan Wang



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

BIRMINGHAM
CONSERVATOIRE



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University



Midlands4Cities
Doctoral Training Partnership
Birmingham Coventry Leicester Nottingham

The Flowering Desert

Opera in 2 acts

Music by Daniel Blanco Albert // Libretto by Roxanne Korda

Created by Infinite Opera
with the support of:

University of Birmingham
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire
Thinktank Planetarium
Midlands4Cities

with special thanks to:

Dr. Amaury Triaud

Overture

Scene 1

Mélodrame 1

Scene 2

- Interval -

Mélodrame 2

Scene 3

Mélodrame 3

Scene 4

Mélodrame 4

Characters

Pantele - Planet E from the TRAPPIST-1 system. It is tidally locked with its Mother Star. Therefore, one half of the planet faces the star and is constantly lit, while the other, in constant shadow, faces the immensity of the universe.

Xoe - Exocomet that after eons of wandering across the universe, returns to TRAPPIST-1 with a vital piece of information.

Mother Star - A red dwarf star in an almost sempiternal process of combustion.

The Measurer - A scientist temporarily living in the observatory of La Silla, Chile. In the breakthrough of a discovery, and after witnessing the phenomenon of the flowering of the Atacama desert, they wonder about the possibility of life in the universe.

Synopsis

Overture - The Measurer lies down at night observing the flowered Atacaman desert and its sky, wondering about the universe.

Scene 1 - Xoe, the comet, returns to the TRAPPIST-1 system. It tells Pantele that it is being observed looking for life. The two halves of the planet reflect about themselves, finally deciding to become that what is being searched.

Mélodrame 1 - In the desert, the Measurer is doubtful over the search for life.

Scene 2 - Pantele asks its Mother Star for help.

Mélodrame 2 - News from the observatory. The Measurer, however stays looking at the sky and at the Earth.

Scene 3 - Pantele asks Xoe for help. The planet needs to generate a magnetic field through tidal heating to defy the power of the Mother Star.

Mélodrame 3 - At the observatory, the Measurer witnesses a unique event, a triple transit of the planets C, E and F.

Scene 4 - Xoe proceeds to make Pantele a habitable planet.

Mélodrame 4 - The Measurer realises that life could be possible in TRAPPIST-1, and therefore, in the whole universe.

LIBRETTO

OVERTURE

Pantele:

I the planet Pantele

(self) One side never night

(shadow) One side never bright

With a shadow as strong as my self

(self) A dusky cage of persistent
sunrise

(shadow) The terminator where light
dies

I the planet Pantele

(shadow) Formed just as my mother
star

(self) From the rubble of her welding
parts

With a shadow as strong as myself

(shadow) Every three years I see my
neighbour twice

(self) Every two years I see my
neighbour thrice

I the planet Pantele

With a shadow as strong as my self

The Measurer:

Though it seemed dead,
The ground tonight is now a purple
field.

Our atmosphere’s chaos made a
flowering spread.

We are watching
Through a robotic eye to chart
things hidden.
They may lie in plain sight but at first
glance we never see them.

Mother Star:

I the Mother Star
Parent, child and carer
Kind and endless source
An axis of the eternal
Young but older than most
Common but barely observed
I the Mother Star

The Measurer:

As I lie

Facing the Atacaman sky
The stars like the data on the screens
of La Silla.

Which new worlds might we
explore?

The stargazed Aquarius constellation
brings us the dim glow of Trappist 1.

It is

Nothing like our sun.
Turbulent and destructive enough
To create an active world, the
desierto florido I lie on.

A red dwarf could never make a
world like ours. There is little hope
for life.

Xoe:

I am the comet Xoe

I am the two tailed trickster
Dropping via counter steered
descent

Towards a mother star skirt’s brim

Frozen stone exterior
Radiate rays effervescent
Excitement begin

The Measurer:

Yet

I will search
Like all good astronomers should.

Xoe:

I am the comet Xoe

I am the two tailed messenger
Travelled far beyond this system’s
edge
In an ever wiser spin

With a motion pendular
Path perturbed by planetary dredge
Secret’s I’ve within

SCENE 1

Recitative

Xoe:

Pantele!

Someone is watching you Pantele!

Pantele:

Xoooooooooooo! (Pantele sings in a
windy fashion)

Good day Xoe

You are back from your wanderings
What news did you bring?

Xoe:

Great and mysterious news!
I think that something watches from
afar

It searches a sky for discoveries
And now it searches for you Pantele!

Aria for two halves of the self

Pantele:

(self) What does Xoe mean?

(shadow) What does Xoe mean?

(shadow) I can see the world outside
Kaleidoscopic distant eyes
I spied to them and now it seems
That one is spying back on me

Dark winds blow to wake my soul
And carry thoughts to make me
whole

(self) These smarting Coriolis winds
Whip up the sands, make thoughts
spin

I never dreamt I’d ever be
Known out there in the galaxy

Another star-bound family?
Someone there is watching ME!

Recitative

Xoe:

Steady on now Pantele . . .
Couple of setbacks deary

They seek a life like theirs, and that
cannot be you.
Soon their gaze will drift, you are not
one of few.

Cheerio, tally Ho, out I trot, off I pop!

Recit

Pantele:

(self) Silly Pantele! Nothing could look upon you. What could they see?
One side scarred another side bruised.
(shadow) But no . . . Maybe I can change, project some majesty - become the things they want to see!

MÉLODRAME 1

The Measurer:

My eyes now closed
Covered by an Atacameñon blanket.
Stars pricking underneath my eyelids.
Cold air currents inspire through my nose.
Why do we search for life at all?
Is that all the universe is there for?

SCENE 2

Brutal mother and forgotten child duet

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

If they find their reflection
They flee in the other direction

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Oh, Iron I say
You look feral today

Pantele:

Mother, can you hear me?
Something happened to us.

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Lithium is missing
Hydrogen is kissing

Pantele:

Mother I'm ecstatic
There's something so fantastic!

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Out struts Titanium Oxide
The cool M Dwarf guide

Pantele:

Mother, can you listen?
I discovered my ambition

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Vanadium Oxide - so amorphous
Rather dense and rather formless

Pantele:

Mother, can you hear me?
This might be momentous!

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Good evening mistress silicon
You've almost reached the central dome

Pantele:

Mother listen to me!
You're being so unruly.

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Such metals make a chill
Through round rouge ruddier fill

Mother Star:

Hydrogen 1 meet Hydrogen 1
Hydrogen 2 meet Hydrogen 1
Helium 3 can't meet Helium 3

Pantele:

Mother don't ignore me!
Your child has so much anxiety
Mother, for once - please hear me!

MÉLODRAME 2

The Measurer:

Screaming? No cheering!
Really I must go back.
It's coming from the observatory.
Let me experience this moment a little longer.

This desert smells nostalgic.
Millennia of worlds who stood here before.
We humans are small - the flowers showed me that.

SCENE 3

Recit

Xoe:

Back I trot, out I pop.

Pantele:

Xoe can you help?
Send me some advice?
How can I be life like them?

Xoe:

I'm so glad you asked
But it will be hard to do

Aria

First -
Your mother's grasp is strong
She holds and governs you.
But you can start to tame her-
Turn her weaponry to armour!

Second -
Alone you cannot manage
You need some added magic
That only comes with luck

Habitability is hospitality and so far,
you have none.

Pantele:

I have neither one?

Tidal Heating Trio

Xoe:

Your mother has been tugging
Within you is a friction
The outward eccentricity
Now dissipates internally
And caused a deformation
While underneath a bubbling

Mother Star:

Look there, and there and there -
Another spot!?
A darkish flare?
This mournful magnetic mass
In constant repair.

Pantele (Self):

As I let my mother pull me
My skins crack to release a moan
Active and sore to my core
A heated tidal bulge

Mother Star:

Now what is that I hear?
Something buzzing at my ear?
This proton punishment you'll see
For failing to just leave me be!

Paaah ha ha ha
Pohhh ho ho ho
Peeee he he he

Xoe:

Your shield is coming
A violet glow is humming

Pantele:

(shadow) Aurora's at my rim
(self) My mother's glare gets dim

Recit

Pantele:

(shadow) Let me be known I want to
bloom

(self) Xoe wait! Help me with the
second task.

MÉLODRAME 3

The Measurer:

It smells dusty in here
Everyone crowds at the screens
Waiting my turn then at last I see
them
Transits
(Planet C, Planet E, Planet F)
I don't dare to blink
A system and planets b to g

SCENE 4

Recit

Xoe:

The second task is harder.
More dangerous and painful than
the first.
It is not just you who will be hurt.

Pantele:

(self) You've made me so afraid
(shadow) But this coloured
peripheral vortex
Is soothing all my scars.

Xoe's triumphant aria

Xoe:

Be brave Pantele.
You are seeing clearly.

At last, you found your magnetism
I am so proud of how you listened
This final journey past Mother star
I noticed my tail burning out fast.

I cannot brightly shine forever
There's more that we can do
together.
And so it is with this last plunge
My adventures all will be expunged

All elements for life can form
Though first they may seem toxic
Embrace your star and be
transformed
Once inert now biotic

Recit

Pantele:

Xoe don't come so close
Be careful - slow down
Xoe!

Xoe:

And now for the final wound
I'll meet you on your winds.
It's time for life to begin!

Pantele:

Aaaaaawhoooooooooooo
Whooooooooohaaaaaaa

Xoe:

Z-O-E

Hymn

Pantele:

The airs I blow have hope
A field protects my face
Thank you, Mother,
Thank you, Xoe,

MÉLODRAME 4

The Measurer:

Through smarting eyes I have to
blink
I think I've seen it all.
My mind has found how life could
be so strange and full in other
worlds.
Thank you Xoe
You reminded me - I believe
In life after all.

INFINITE OPERA

Infinite Opera is an innovative small-size experimental opera creation company based in Birmingham. They are the proud creators of the first ever Beer Opera and many science-related works. They are interested in subverting the traditional genre by collaborating with businesses, institutions and professionals from different practices.

LIBRETTIST ROXANNE KORDA

Roxanne is an opera singer and librettist. She likes to explore; presenting new opera, on esoteric subject matter, in unique spaces, to different audiences. She co-founded the company Infinite Opera in order to combine her love of science, philosophy and music.

She is currently enrolled on practice-based PhD with the Midlands4Cities Doctoral Training Partnership at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, exploring how to use science in creating new operatic characters and narrative. She has a MMus in Vocal Performance (Distinction) from RBC, and previously studied Physics and Philosophy BSc.

She is a varied performer whose previous roles and concerts include classical (Norina - Don Pasquale, Fiordiligi - Così Fan Tutte) to romantic (Vier Letzte Lieder, Rosalinda - Die Fledermaus) to contemporary (Entropy - Entanglement! An Entropic tale). Her libretti include Besse: Water, Rye and Hops, and Entanglement: An Entropic Tale.

COMPOSER DANIEL BLANCO ALBERT

Daniel Blanco Albert is a composer and conductor. He is Infinite Opera's co-artistic director and resident composer, for which he has written the music of the physics dissemination opera *Entanglement! An Entropic Tale*, the operatic beer trilogy, *Besse*, the folk masquerade *Autohoodening: The Rise of Captain Swing*, and the planetarium opera *The Flowering Desert*.

He has also worked for theatrical productions and artistic installations across Europe, collaborating with directors such as Aleksandar Dundjerovic, Stephen Simms or Lise Olson. He often collaborates with the Welsh National Opera's engagement programme in the Midlands.

Daniel studied Composition in Spain and in the UK, getting the Extraordinary Prize at Valencia Conservatoire and a BMus (First) and Masters (Distinction) at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (funded with a Leverhulme Arts Scholarship). He is currently pursuing a PhD in Performing Arts at Birmingham City University as part of the Midlands4Cities Doctoral Programme.

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