

Christina Johnston gives special concert in the Czech Republic marking the 400th anniversary of the birth of William Shakespeare

It was a very big concert filled with the operatic versions of love tragedies of Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet. The specific pieces were as follows :-

Charles Gounod: Romeo and Juliet - Juliet's aria (Je veux vivre)

Ambrois Thomas: Hamlet - Ophelia's scene (A vos jeux, mes amis)

Vincenzo Bellini: Romeo and Juliet - Juliet's aria (Eccomi in lieta vesta)

Christina was the soprano soloist accompanied by the Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Walter Attanasi

Christina says : *"In 2016 we mark the 400th anniversary of the death of the English playwright and poet William Shakespeare. For a number of reasons his work has appealed to composers of different periods who have frequently drawn inspiration from it.*

I sang beautiful aria's from Romeo and Juliet, the romantic tragedy is one of the best known love stories that Vincenzo Bellini transformed into opera, but he was not alone in this endeavour, since this theme was also taken up by Charles Gounod. I also sung Ophelie's mad scene from Hamlet by Ambrois Thomas, one of the hardest arias for coloratura soprano.

The Italian conductor Walter Attanasi conducts opera at many leading opera houses around the world, not to mention symphonic orchestras around the world too.

It was an honour to be part of this concert especially with my English heritage. The audience were thrilled and filled with excitement throughout the concert. It was wonderful to see how Shakespeare's works can inspire people even today.



I will be singing in Suffolk for the first time since making my debut album. I am singing to raise money for former Framlingham College pupil (in my year) Henry Dunham's sisters charity "Annie's Challenge". We are helping raise money for brain cancer sufferers. I will sing songs from my new album "Blessing" and also sing a couple of these beautiful Shakespeare inspired arias at the concert on 8th and 9th April in Framlingham Church."

Below is a related article in the East Anglia Daily Times on 17 February 2016

Shakespeare anniversary concert marked by Suffolk soprano



■ Christina Johnston performs at a concert to mark Shakespeare's 400th anniversary in the Czech Republic.

Picture: CONTRIBUTED

A former Framlingham College pupil has performed in a celebratory concert in the Czech Republic to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare.

Suffolk soprano Christina

Johnston performed alongside the Bohuslav Martin Philharmonic Orchestra at the concert last Thursday, which featured operatic versions of Shakespeare's love tragedies, including *Romeo and Juliet* and

Hamlet. Ms Johnston said: "It was an honour to be part of this concert, especially with my English heritage."

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"It was wonderful to see how Shakespeare's works can inspire people even today."

Ms Johnston is set to return to Suffolk to perform at St Michael's Church, Framlingham, on April 8 and 9.