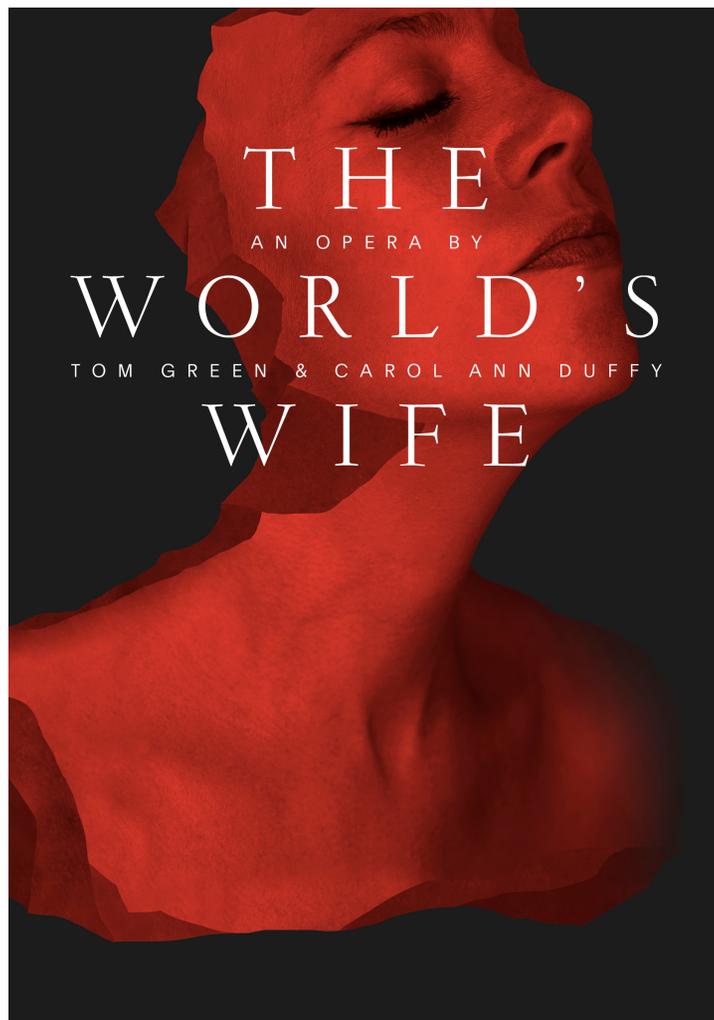


20 July 2017
Press release

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**Carol Ann Duffy's *The World's Wife*
poetry collection becomes a chamber
opera by trailblazing young composer
Tom Green**

World Premiere on Sun 15 Oct 2017, WNO's
Millennium Centre (Weston Studio), Cardiff



Up-and-coming British composer Tom Green's first chamber opera *The World's Wife* – based on Poet Laureate **Carol Ann Duffy's** 1999 collection of poems of the same title – will receive its world premiere at **Welsh National Opera's Millennium Centre (Weston Studio) in Cardiff on Sunday 15 October 2017**. The first performance will be followed by a six-date Welsh tour stopping in **Brecon, Swansea, Holyhead, Aberystwyth**, Caernarfon, and Milford Haven.

Scored for soprano, string quartet, and loop pedals, *The World's Wife* is a musical adaptation of Duffy's poems presenting actions and stories of famous men of history and myth from their spouses' perspectives. The feminist approach to the literary collection is further strengthened in Green's work, as his score includes musical quotes of music by female composers – better known or forgotten – ranging from Clara Schumann to Barbara Strozzi. The musical staging of *The World's Wife* thus features double revenge from the female point of view: not only do women re-tell world-renowned stories in their own words, but often overlooked musical works by women are here celebrated and become the perfect commentary to accompany the presented tales.

Besides the traditional classical repertoire, Green's mixed musical background encompasses jazz, pop, rock and choral music. As a trained composer, his attempts to broaden the language of classical music include the frequent use of unconventional tools and instruments such as digital effects

and electric guitars. In *The World's Wife*, Green's choice to feature loop pedals as part of the score enables a solo soprano – a singular archetype – to sing multiple characters at the same time. Female voices can duet with one another as their perspectives are digitally brought together on stage while elements of a universal nature are sung by a looped choir, summing up contributions by all the featured women of history and myth.

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Bringing to life the many women of *The World's Wife* is Australian-born, London-based soprano and actress **Amanda Forbes**, whose career highlights include the creation of the roles of Leni and Fräulein Bürstner in the World Premiere of Philip Glass's opera *The Trial* based on Franz Kafka's novel. She is accompanied by Cardiff based **Mavron String Quartet**, an ensemble frequently involved in the premieres and performances of contemporary music by composers such as Peter Reynolds, Rihan Samuel, and Ian Stephens. The staging is directed by **Ed Madden**, critically acclaimed recently for his rendition of Sam Steiner's *Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons* at Edinburgh Fringe.

The World's Wife is a production by **Welsh National Opera, Taliesin Arts Centre, Echo Forest**, and **The Mavron Quartet** with support by **PRS for Music Foundation, Arts Council Wales**, and the **Hinrichsen Foundation**.

Listing Information — *The World's Wife* is sung in English with surtitles in English. Running time is 70 minutes with no interval.

Cast & Creative Team

Composer Tom Green
Soprano Amanda Forbes
with the Mavron String Quartet
Director Ed Madden
Designer Grace Smart

Performances

Sun 15 Oct 2017, Millennium Centre, Cardiff
(Pre-performance talk by Tom Green)
Thu 19 Oct 2017, Theatr Brycheiniog, Brecon
Sat 21 Oct 2017, Taliesin Arts Centre, Swansea
Sat 28 Oct, Ucheldre, Holyhead
Wed 1 Nov, Aberystwyth Arts Centre
Thu 2 Nov, Galeri, Caernarfon
Fri 3 Nov, Torch Theatre, Milford Haven

I want to confront the tradition of 'undoing' female characters in opera, literature, history, our inherited culture – and Carol Ann Duffy's words are perfect for excavating these ancient prejudices. Composing with a motherlode of loop pedals has allowed me to have multiple active characters sung by a single soprano, all giving an explosive re-telling of their stories. As the string quartet loops itself from a string orchestra to an army of mechanical ants, the soprano's characters accumulate, and she becomes an archetype – the World's Wife. This piece isn't about healing old wounds, but drawing current questions into the spotlight. I've written the music using material from various female composers – is this just another man stealing women's work for glory? Maybe. Questions of gender are still with us, and they need to be asked. Tom Green – Composer

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