

Second Movement

Tourettes   
action

# OPERA-TIC

A digital opera in 15 scenes



**Co-created by** composer Michael Betteridge and collaborators from Second Movement and Tourettes Action's Your Story, Your Voice, Your Stage project.  
**Film by** Alisdair Kitchen. **Produced by** Second Movement and Tourettes Action.

10 July 2021, 7pm premiere (50 mins)  
Available free to view until 13 July 2021, 7pm



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

## Tourettes Action

The Opera-Tic project in many ways could not have come at a better time. It has provided a focus throughout lockdown for many adults with Tourette Syndrome. Meeting each week via Zoom in a wonderfully creative, fun and accepting environment, Opera-Tic shows the huge talent present in the Tourettes community, something we at Tourettes Action have always known, but now, through this production, it is available for the wider community to discover. Tourettes Action are delighted to have had this fantastic opportunity to work with Second Movement and it is more than fitting that the launch of Opera-Tic coincides with our 40th Anniversary.

## Michael Betteridge

Working collaboratively with diverse groups of people is something I've done for many years as an opera maker, but this project has – personally – been one of the most impactful. Not only have I learned extensively about the experiences of living with a condition I foolishly assumed I had some understanding of, but working with people from all over the country during what has been an exceptionally challenging 16 months or so has been such a welcome opportunity to connect and create with many phenomenal individuals. Not only did working online allow us to collaborate with a wider group, but also allowed us to delve deeper and really interrogate what we were making together. It has been a significant project – I have learned so much about my practice, about myself, but also – most importantly – about others. I hope the opera leaves you nourished and with greater empathy as the process has done for me.

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## Introduction

**Opera-tic** is a new contemporary opera about Tourette Syndrome (TS) created by a group of adults with TS and composer Michael Betteridge, produced by Second Movement and Tourettes Action and developed through a co-creative opera making project called Your Story, Your Voice, Your Stage.

**Opera-tic** explores through sound and image what it means to live with TS and particularly those aspects of the condition which cannot be seen. The music, text and film of the opera have been created to relate and represent its collaborators' experience, stories and sensations of TS. **Opera-tic** has many moments of tension, but also of release, of contemplation and great humour. It is a wonderful and accessible piece, set to an expressive and responsive film.

It is also a representation of the strength we can all find in ourselves, to accept a challenge, which sometimes we'll fail but often win, to adapt to circumstances we never thought we'd meet and to find compassion and empathy for others when we may not understand or know what is going on for them, and most importantly to never lose our sense of humour.

Second Movement, Tourettes Action and Michael Betteridge are enormously grateful to this group of exceptional collaborators who contributed so generously to the project, sharing their stories and experiences of TS, which are at the beating heart of the opera, and their time, ideas and boundless creative energy, sustained through such a challenging and difficult time.

**Abigail Toland**, Second Movement

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## Opera-tic credits

### **The Your Story, Your Voice, Your Stage**

Abby Phillips  
Andy Harmer  
Ashley Bowles  
Ash Curry  
Charlotte McGregor-Graham  
Charlotte Rushton  
Clare O'Donnell  
Deborah Turnbull  
Felix Peckitt  
Giovanni Arsciwals  
Grace Myers  
Luke Montague  
Paul Stevenson  
Will Dowland

**Texts by** Michael Betteridge, devised  
with the Your Story, Your Voice, Your  
Stage Company

### **Additional material**

6. 'Thoughts'  
– words by Giovanni Arsciwals
10. 'Tactics'  
– words by Felix Peckitt,  
performed by Felix Peckitt
14. 'A perfect day'  
– words by Paul Stevenson

### **Performed by**

The Opera-tic Company

and

Charlotte Trepess soprano  
Jenny Carson soprano  
Rachel Gilmore mezzo-soprano  
Aaron O'Hare baritone  
Christopher Pulley piano  
Katie Foster violin  
Rhiannon James viola  
Polly Virr cello  
Adam Fenton actor

### **Composer and Musical Director:**

Michael Betteridge

**Film by** Alisdair Kitchen

**Graphic Motion Design and  
Sound by** Sam Gee

**Producer:** Abigail Toland

**Produced by** Second Movement  
and Tourettes Action

## Biographies

**Second Movement** is an opera company which supports new opera and people making opera for the first time. Current and recent projects include *Your Story, Your Voice, Your Stage*, a co-creative project in collaboration with the charity Tourettes Action and as co-producer for *12:42*, a documentary film exploring creative processes, isolation and digital connections (National Opera Studio, 2020). Second Movement produces and curates rough for opera, a regular performance platform for new opera and work in development which has supported more than 50 composers since 2011.

Production highlights include Martinů's *The Knife's Tears* (UK premiere 2007, Brno and Prague 2010) Rothschild's *Violin by Fleischmann and Shostakovich* (UK staged premiere 2007), Menotti's *The Medium* (2006, NI Tour 2011) and *Zátopek!* by Emily Howard, part of PRS for Music Foundation's New Music 20×12, supported by Jerwood Charitable Foundation, in partnership with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (2012, Liverpool and London). Second Movement was co-producer for *12:40* – twelve new opera arias for the National Opera Studio's 40th anniversary (2018).

[www.secondmovement.org.uk](http://www.secondmovement.org.uk)

**Tourettes Action** is the UK's leading support charity for people with Tourette Syndrome. We help ensure they receive the practical support and social acceptance they need to help live their lives to the full. Tourette Syndrome is a neurological condition that causes verbal and motor tics plus a wide range of co-occurring conditions. While it does not affect intellect, it can get in the way of being able to concentrate. It makes a person 'different', sometimes isolating them from their peers and can often make it difficult for them to form friendships.

We offer information, advice and support via our helpdesk, live chat, befriending service plus a variety of online webinars and chat rooms. We also host family residential weekends and weekends for adults with TS. We give people the opportunity to form friendships and engage in new activities in a safe, friendly and accepting environment.

[www.tourettes-action.org.uk](http://www.tourettes-action.org.uk)

## Biographies (continued)

**Michael Betteridge** Described as ‘inventive’ (*The Financial Times*) and ‘bold’ and ‘colourful’ (*The Times*), Michael is a composer with an eclectic output creating work that challenges and inspires audiences and performers alike. Predominantly working with voice, theatre and with nonprofessional/young performers he has created work for the likes of Alþjóðóperan (Folk Opera Iceland), Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Cheltenham Music Festival, Den Jyske Opera, London Symphony Orchestra, Nicola Benedetti, Opera North and Welsh National Opera. His music has featured on BBC Radio 3 and 4 and he has received accolades for his work in the UK and abroad including nominations for an RPS Award (*Across the Sky*) and an Icelandic Music Award (#echochamber). He is artistic director of the open access low voiced LGBTQ+ choir The Sunday Boys based in the city of Manchester, UK.

[www.michaelbetteridge.com](http://www.michaelbetteridge.com)

**Alisdair Kitchen** is a London-based filmmaker with a specialism in the arts and culture. His work has featured on Classic FM, OperaVision, The Arts Channel, and has been supported by Arts Council England. He was recently selected as a recipient of a Genesis Foundation Kickstart Fund grant. He is Director of Digital Programmes at the Rye Arts Festival in East Sussex, and regularly produces film content for leading London art galleries, including Waddington Custot. His first feature film is currently in development. Prior to becoming a full-time filmmaker, Alisdair enjoyed a career as a professional classical pianist and conductor. He holds first class Bachelor and Masters degrees from the Royal College of Music and has worked on the music staff in the RCM vocal faculty for several years. He studied conducting with David Syrus and Sir Colin Davis. Between 2011 and 2018, Alisdair was the founder director of a small theatre and opera company – Euphonia Studio – and was privileged to enjoy the mentorship of Jonathan Miller.

[www.alisdairkitchen.com](http://www.alisdairkitchen.com)