

The Haddo House Choral & Operatic Society

1974

The late **David and June Gordon (Lord and Lady Aberdeen)**, founded the Haddo House Choral & Operatic Society in 1945. Since they organised the first Christmas



Carol Concert in 1945 in the family chapel (continuing there every year to this day), a succession of internationally renowned artists has helped make this North East Scotland venue a lively stage for the very best in choral, operatic and drama productions.

David sadly died in the 1974 but June continued on and was very supportive of young musicians. **Dame Janet Baker** was asked to perform there

immediately on graduating from the Royal College of Music because Lady Aberdeen thought her 'promising' and Glasgow-born **Rosalind Sutherland** first performed Desdemona in Verdi's 'Otello' at Haddo in 1996; returned as Micaela in 'Carmen' in 1997 before finding fame taking the title role in 'Madame Butterfly' at San Francisco Opera House.

Judith Lovat, now with the Philadelphia Opera, gained early experience at Haddo. Other eminent musicians to appear have included: **Benjamin Britten, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Willard White, Sarah Walker, Neil Mackie, Patricia MacMahon** and **Lisa Milne** to name but a few.

For many years a **Summer Play** was produced, using the renowned Globe Stage in the Hall for Shakespeare one year and presenting another playwright's work the next. As a young man **Prince Edward** appeared several times in these productions.

2003

In **2003** there was a special programme to mark **Lady Aberdeen's 90th year**, Donizetti's tragic opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* was performed at Easter and in November HHCOS was joined by other local choirs



and singers in Elgar's magnificent *The Dream of Gerontius* (in the Music Hall, Aberdeen) under the baton of **James Loughran**.

2006



In **2006** the Society celebrated its **60th anniversary** with a year of special events. This started with the **Carols** (2005), where in addition to the usual Chapel concerts, they performed in an extra-large production in the Parish Church, Ellon. This concert included all 120 members of the Haddo Junior Choirs for the first time. In June the Society produced a lavish production of Johann

Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, in association with Carl Rosa opera. This was followed immediately by a celebratory Champagne Summer Ball. Their final event was an epic concert in the Music Hall, Aberdeen, of **Verdi's Requiem** featuring 120 singers, 65 musicians, a star line up of performers and guest conductor **David Jones**.

2010

In **2010** a major concert was produced as a tribute to Lady Aberdeen after her death in 2009. This was in the Music Hall in Aberdeen on September 25th, and featured musicians with strong connections to June performing Bach's *Mass in B Minor* – a work she conducted more often than any other. The chorus was joined by singers past and present who wished to pay tribute to this very special lady.



The **David and June Gordon Memorial Trust** carries on their good work by supporting the arts in the North East. They raise money to distribute to well deserving organisations.