

## Title of case study

Anya 17

### 1. Summary of the impact

'*Anya 17* is not just an opera. It's a campaign' (cast member's blog, <http://tinyurl.com/ne64uqt>). *Anya 17* (an opera about human trafficking), first performed in March 2012, generated wide media and civil society attention. 13 UK and international anti-trafficking campaigning groups have endorsed the opera and used it to raise awareness and help leverage their agenda to change legislation. Third sector and media attention has taken the research to a wider community than just the original audience, winning recognition and enabling follow-through of various kinds. Collaboration, publicity and support from NGOs has enabled *Anya17* to further its reach internationally, with performances in Romania, Germany, the UK and the USA in the near future creating opportunities for developing further impacts on opera audiences, campaigning organisations, wider civil society and government in Europe and America.

### 2. Underpinning research

*Anya17* is a one-act opera written to expose the world of sex trafficking and slavery in the UK. Its narrative revolves around four young women deceived and trafficked from Eastern Europe, and their struggle to survive. It aims to educate about the real lives behind the trade in humans, primarily for sexual slavery.

*Principal research insights* which relate to the impacts were:

- The strong evidence of the potential to engage civil society organisations, policy-makers and their constituencies through the medium of opera, in ways that go beyond the normal use of high art simply as a means of fund-raising.
- The potential of the publicity surrounding the opera and its performances in a relatively niche context (live performance of contemporary music) to help raise wider public awareness of human trafficking was quickly understood by international anti-trafficking organisations, who found ways to use it to support their campaigns to influence policy-makers and make changes in UK law.
- The effectiveness of uncompromisingly 'contemporary' music in the form of an opera (rather than, for example, musical theatre) effectively to articulate a highly emotive 'real-life' story on a topic never before tackled in the medium. This was achieved by, among other things, having young operatically-trained singer-actors, a 14-piece 'pit-band' carefully scored so as to allow audibility of text, and referencing of Eastern and Western European popular music idioms.

*Research* was undertaken from about December 2010 until February 2012 (libretto, composition and orchestration); October 2011 until the première in early March, 2012 (casting, rehearsals, PR); March 2012–July 2013 (follow-up engagement with campaigning groups and promoters). It was premièred in a semi-staged version at Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on 7 March 2012, where the 14-piece orchestra was the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic's Ensemble 10/10; a second performance was given with a student orchestra at the RNCM on 9 March 2012, as part of the New Music North West Festival. A variety of video interviews with cast and composer have been made, and the librettist created and manages a burgeoning web-site that includes social media, blogging, and press and media content (<http://www.anya17.co.uk/>).

#### *Key Researchers*

Composer: Professor Adam Gorb, RNCM Head of Composition,; Other key researchers were: Stage Director: Caroline Clegg, RNCM Tutor in Stagecraft (winner of Human Trafficking Foundation Media Award, 2011 for her production of 'Slave'); Musical Director: Clark Rundell (RNCM Head of Conducting); libretto by Ben Kaye (freelance writer)

#### *Context*

*Anya 17* received its first performances as part of the New Music North West Festival, established by the RNCM in 2002 as a week-long, biennial collaborative celebration of contemporary music by North West regional composers and ensembles. The Festival is based

at the RNCM, although it always includes concerts in other venues and both student and professional ensembles, including the RLPO Ensemble 10/10 and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra and BBC Radio 3. It is the largest festival of its kind outside London and has built up a wide following over the years since it started. The Festival provides a platform for RNCM composers and performers to research, develop and perform new works using the resources of the institution and its professional partners.

### 3. References to the research

1. Composition: *Anya 17*, one-act opera. Libretto: Ben Kaye; music: Adam Gorb. Published: Awayday Music, 2012 (full score, see REF2).

2. Audio and video recordings of second performance of *Anya 17* at RNCM, Concert Hall, 9 March 2012: Soloists from RNCM School of Opera, RNCM New Ensemble, conductor, Clark Rundell (CD and DVD see REF2). Further sound and video clips: <http://www.awaydaymusic.co.uk/opera/>

*Evidence of quality:*

Review by Paul Driver, *Sunday Times*, 18 March 2012 (<http://tinyurl.com/oj5zys5>)  
Opera programmed for future professional performances at:

- Philharmonic Hall, Timișoara, Romania (semi-staged production) 17 October 2013 (<http://tinyurl.com/pdewsm>)
- S udth uringisches Staatstheater, Meiningen, Germany (first fully-staged production), 28 November; 8 + 14 December 2013; 10 January + 8 February 2014 (<http://tinyurl.com/pxagpny>)
- Opera Parall elle, San Francisco (North American premi ere), 20, 21 + 22 June 2014 (<http://tinyurl.com/nd839hr>)
- Advanced discussions with Welsh National Opera for performances in 2014/15
- Human Trafficking Foundation Media Awards, October 17 2012: ‘Best Stage or Film Production Dealing with Human Trafficking’

*Grants:*

- Arts Council England and British Council Strategic Touring Awards:  5,000, for concert performance on 17 October 2013 by National Opera of Timișoara with artists from the UK and Romania. PI: Professor Adam Gorb. Awarded 13.06.2013 (<http://tinyurl.com/orhmp7a>)
- RNCM Research Fund:  1,860 for artists’ travel to Romania. Awarded 20.05.2013

### 4. Details of the impact

The early stages of writing the opera included composer and librettist consulting representatives of 11 anti-trafficking organisations (principally City Hearts, which also later facilitated a meeting in sheltered housing between trafficking victims and opera cast members). These organisations gave valuable feedback to ensure that the content of the opera was as accurate as possible. Meanwhile, the wider potential of the opera to effect change in public attitudes was part of the agenda from the beginning.

A website, YouTube channel (3000 hits), and Facebook page (160 followers) were set up. Introductions to senior policy-makers were made through the offices of Kaye’s MP, Bob Walter, who backed the project (<http://tinyurl.com/qfabfsr>) and subsequently arranged a meeting between librettist and composer, and the Immigration Minister, Damian Green, at a reception hosted by the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street to mark Anti-Slavery Day, 17 October 2011. They also met other politicians and NGO leaders at the House of Lords, including Sir Anthony Steen, Chairman of the Human Trafficking Foundation. Representatives of the UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN GIFT) were quick to endorse the project, understanding its potential: Siria Gastelum, UN GIFT’s Public Information Officer, said: ‘We commend this effort to engage and inspire the anti-trafficking community while raising awareness about human trafficking’. Tony Lloyd, MP for Central Manchester, visited rehearsals

at the RNCM and recorded an interview (<http://tinyurl.com/p2ht7e6>), in which he talked about the potential for the opera to make an impact on people beyond 'just entertainment': 'If it takes things through to people who've not thought about these issues before, it's an amazing service... On the night the production goes live, there will be women working on the streets of Liverpool, Manchester, all our big cities ... this show is, in the end, about making this stop'. Further support was given by Catherine Bearder, MEP.

Media preview coverage picked up on the significance of the opera as a way of discussing wider issues. For example, a story by Glyn Mon Hughes trailing the performances in *The Liverpool Daily Post* on 1 March 2012 was run on its Arts pages on 4 March 2012 (<http://tinyurl.com/o6c3rq2>), quoting statistics on trafficking and comments from the Director, Caroline Clegg, about the meeting between the cast and victims of sex trafficking. Two days later, *The Independent* carried an article quoting Sir Jonathan Miller, who said that 'the project showed no subject should be off-limits', and also Iqtadar Hasnain, a spokesman for Anti-Slavery International, who said 'As far as we're aware, there has never been an opera on this subject. We hope that people will see it and realise that this is a form of slavery that is happening on their doorstep today'.

On 6 March, *Liverpool Confidential* (monthly unique visitors, c.24,000; monthly page views, c.50,000) ran an on-line story sub-headed 'United Nations backs opera about Europe's £20bn dirty secret' (<http://tinyurl.com/nme9iqj>). On the day of the Liverpool premiere, the mainstream news programme, BBC North West tonight (live audience: c.500,000) felt able to broadcast a feature report (2' 17"), including rehearsal footage and interviews with cast members, intercut with an interview with Brenda Gardner of Stop the Traffik Campaign, in which she talked about the realities of human trafficking in Liverpool.

By the opening night, the following organisations had formally endorsed the opera: Anti-Slavery International; City Hearts; ECPAT UK; Human Trafficking Foundation; Purple Teardrop Campaign; The Salvation Army; Stop the Traffik; Stop UK; Unseen UK; Unchosen; and UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (GIFT), who were designated 'official supporting body'. The latter's involvement included an extended Twitter interview with the librettist (<http://tinyurl.com/oavdpja>). The organisation provided 'How to Respond' packs that were distributed at the Liverpool premiere and they also helped with PR. Purple Teardrop had an information stall in the foyer at the RNCM performance, and were supported by volunteers from Soroptomist International, which also endorsed the opera. A spokesperson from Purple Teardrop reported that for them, being 'partners' of the opera helped them 'extend the public's awareness of human trafficking and its victims to both organisations' followers and supporters', and they used Twitter, Facebook and their own website to promote their partnership. Following the second performance of the opera, a member of the audience blogged: "I saw this performance last night at the RNCM. It was an incredibly powerful and moving piece ... This thought-provoking opera deserves a much wider platform as it demonstrates how modern opera can, and should be used." A short film of rehearsals of *Anya 17* had had 700 views on YouTube by 31 July 2013. The two performances were seen by live audiences totalling 632 people, with a further 812 viewings of a YouTube 'showreel' (<http://tinyurl.com/pjiplk3>) by 31 July 2013.

*Anya17* was positively reviewed in the *Sunday Times* and subsequently won 'Best Stage or Film Production Dealing with Human Trafficking, 2012', presented by John Bercow, MP at the Speaker's House on 17 October 2012 in the presence of British MPs, parliamentarians and former ministers from across the EU, as well as journalists, police and border agency staff, and NGOs.

Among those who attended the first performance was the Chairman of the Friendship Foundation (UK-Romania). The Foundation is active in increasing public awareness of human trafficking, seeing it as vital to changing policy: "that's how governments get cajoled into making laws". The Foundation immediately saw the potential of taking *Anya17* to Romania and presenting it to policy makers and campaigning organisations as an innovative way of promoting a strong message from a 'receiving' country such as the UK to a 'source' country such as Romania. A successful application for funding was made to Arts Council England for

£5k a further award of £1,860 from the RNCM in June 2013, so that a performance of Anya17 could be part of the Third International Symposium on Human Trafficking in Arad, Romania, on 17 October 2013.

Immediately following the 2012 première, two international opera companies became aware of the work and decided during the course of their planning for the 2013-14 seasons during summer 2012, to stage the opera. Arrangements were made for the first fully-staged run, at the Stadttheater, Meiningen, Germany (November–December, 2013), and for the US première at Opera Parallèle in San Francisco (June, 2014). The Executive Director of Opera Parallèle, Tod Brody, describes how ‘the opera company’s first focus is the artistic quality of the work, but the power of art to bring awareness, and to change minds, is something that’s of great interest and concern to us’. In preparation for the production, they assembled a Community Taskforce of organisations, including the SAGE project ([www.sagesf.org](http://www.sagesf.org)), whose ‘mission is to improve the lives of persons who have experienced or are at risk of sexual exploitation, human trafficking, violence and other forms of trauma’. They are working with the German consulate in San Francisco to organise a reception with celebrity speakers, including local political figures to enlist support for the cause, and for the *Anya17* performances’. Talks began with David Pountney at Welsh National Opera in January 2013 about possible performances there in 2014/15 and these are now well-advanced.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. Chairman, The Friendship Foundation (UK-Romania) <http://www.thefriendshipfoundation.co.uk/>
  - *impact of Anya 17 in the organisation’s anti-trafficking advocacy work in Romania*
2. Director, The Human Trafficking Foundation <http://www.humantraffickingfoundation.org/> (<http://tinyurl.com/ooz3d4e>)
  - *significance of Anya 17 for raising awareness of anti-slavery campaign; Anti-slavery Day Media Awards 2012*
3. President, Pro Prietenia Arad, Romania. <http://www.proprietenia.ro/index.php/en/>
  - *impact of Anya 17 in the organisation’s anti-trafficking advocacy work in Romania*
4. *Anya 17* Librettist (see website: <http://www.anya17.co.uk/index.htm>)
  - *Initiated contacts with various organisations and policy-makers during research phase; commissioned web-site and is a regular blogger about Anya 17*
5. Music Director, Südthüringisches Staatstheater, Meiningen, Germany
  - *In April 2012 recommended the opera be included in the Stadttheater’s 2013-14 season*
6. Executive and Artistic Directors, Opera Parallèle, San Francisco, USA
  - *Decision to programme the opera*
7. Purple Teardrop (<http://www.purpleteardrop.org.uk/?s=Anya+17>)
  - *Importance of ‘partnering’ the opera to their campaigning and that of Soroptomist International*
8. Press previews: Helen Carter, *The Guardian*, 9 January 2012; Emily Dugan, *The Independent* 3 March 2010 (<http://tinyurl.com/6rofzfz>)
9. TV report: BBC Northwest Tonight, 7 March 2012 ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N\\_iZA3dl3fE#t=12](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N_iZA3dl3fE#t=12))
  - *includes interview with Brenda Gardner of Stop the Traffik*
10. Press review: Paul Driver, *Sunday Times* 18 March 2012 (<http://tinyurl.com/oj5zys5>);