



Worth your attention: Richard Jones's gleefully seedy production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* will be at the Royal Opera House in September

over the last three years and released nine online EPs. Until recently he hadn't made a penny, of course—the video for his hit single “The A Team” famously cost £20.

Sheeran's first full-length album combines a kind of organic R&B (vocal acrobatics, beat-box percussion) with the urgency of street poetry. The new single “You Need Me (I Don't Need You)” is a defence of musical authenticity over a complex backdrop of loops and effects pedals. Other tracks are teenage love songs, their touching lyrics toughened up with the percussive scratch of an acoustic guitar. Sheeran started off playing in car parks and may one day end up back there. For now, he is thriving in a straitened music industry because independence and struggle are his themes—and because he's too young to know or care how much easier it used to be.

Kate Mossman

Opera

Il trittico

Royal Opera House, 12th-27th September, Tel: 020 7304 4000

Richard Jones's gleefully seedy production of *Gianni Schicchi* returns to the Royal Opera House as part of his staging of *Il trittico*, Puccini's 1918 triptych of one-act

operas. Few companies attempt all three in one night. At three hours and 45 minutes, the running time is daunting and the production costs high. But *Il trittico* is arguably Puccini's greatest achievement. The squalid grind of poverty in industrial Paris (*Il tabarro*), the luminescence of redemption in a closed convent (*Suor Angelica*), and the sniping rhythms of a family at war (*Schicchi*) are heard in three distinct works.

In the true-crime tragedy of *Il tabarro*, klaxons blare across the fetid waters of the Seine as stevedores and rag-sellers snatch a little pleasure from their back-breaking lives. The suffering of the heroine of *Suor Angelica* is more decorous—the nuns at Puccini's sister's convent wept when they heard the score—while in the comedy *Schicchi*, a clan of Florentine grotesques bicker over a will while the body is still warm.

Having balanced pathos and bathos in last season's popera, *Anna Nicole*, it will be interesting to see how Richard Jones makes his mark on Puccini's high-octane trilogy. With sopranos Eva-Maria Westbroek and Anja Harteros as Giorgetta and Angelica, and baritone Lucio Gallo donning both the cloak of *Il tabarro* and *Schicchi*'s string-vest, it is an irresistible package, and a chance to hear Antonio Pappano conduct the repertoire he knows most intimately.

Anna Picard

Art

The Museum of Everything: Exhibition No 4
Selfridges Ultralounge, London,
2nd September-25th October

The London department store's basement art-space has become something of a go-to gallery in recent years, staging exhibitions of everything from graffiti art to Vivienne Westwood shoes. In September, it becomes the unlikely venue for the Museum of Everything's latest showcase of outsider art.

The museum, which has no permanent home, was founded in 2009 by filmmaker James Brett to show work by “unintentional, untrained and undiscovered artists.” This, its fourth exhibition, features 50 artists with physical and learning disabilities. Among them are Tomoyuki Shinki, whose DayGlo drawings of musclebound wrestlers recall the excesses of Manga comics, and Harald Stoffers, who records the small events of each day in unsent letters to his mother, his meticulous cursive flowing across sheets of paper like the layered strata of rock.

The quality of the art is startling, and the location—Selfridges' famous window displays will host reproductions of pieces—adds a welcome element of playfulness. **B**

Laura Barnett