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Graeme Danby reviews

Buxton International Festival, Alzira

En vieux père (Alvaro), comme en comptent souvent les opéras de l'Italien, Graeme Danby fait entendre l'archétype de la basse noble qu'on apprécie beaucoup dans l'ultime duo de l'Acte II - **Anaclase**

***Translation:** As the old father (Alvaro), a stock figure of Italian opera, Graeme Danby embodies the archetypical noble bass, much appreciated in the last duet of Act II.*

Graeme Danby, as Gusmano's father, had an important role to play in the plot and was needed in the ensembles, yet he is denied a solo of his own. That said, the moment during the Act One finale when he pleads with his son (James Cleverton) for Zamoro's life was a moving moment, rendered all the more striking by being finely sung by the two singers, baritone and bass - **Planet Hugill**

Graeme Danby made a seriously-sung and respectable Alvaro - **Mark Ronan**

Graeme Danby was a redoubtable Alvaro, Gusmano's father, who cradles his son on his deathbed - **Bachtrack**

Graeme Danby brings maturity and experience to the part of Gusmano's father, Alvaro - **The Arts Desk**

Graeme Danby an involving Alvaro - **The Financial Times**

As the respective fathers of Gusmano and Alzira, Graeme Danby and Phil Wilcox offer sturdy support as Alvaro and Ataliba, if less lyrical, but the contrast is effective - **Classical Source**

As his father Alvaro, Graeme Danby acted his role well - **Seen and Heard International**

Royal Opera, Covent Garden, 1984

Maazel's project is much blessed by the quality of his singers. Nancy Gustafson is a winning Julia, Graeme Danby and Richard Margison respectively sinister and threatening as Charrington and O'Brien - **The Daily Mail**

The whole cast were first class, and the Royal Opera Chorus was formidable. Star performances came from Simon Keenlyside..., from Nancy Gustafson as Julia, and from Richard Margison, Lawrence Brownlee, Graeme Danby and Diana Damrau - **The Daily Express**

Maazel conducts his creation with his usual hardedged brio, and there are excellent cameos from Graeme Danby, Jeremy White and Diana Damrau - **The Daily Telegraph**

Graeme Danby, Jeremy White, Mary LloydDavies and Johnnie Fiorri all provided telling contributions - **The Guardian**

Irish National Opera, Le nozze di Figaro

Among the smaller roles, Graeme Danby reprised his seasoned Dr Bartolo - **The Times**

The singers are very physically busy, with much complexity in the interactions. But the solo arias are given plenty of space and stillness. The groping intimacies are well played. There is rough and tumble, as though the opera has had an injection of youth-theatre knockabout; singers end up flat on the stage occasionally. Soprano Aoife Miskelly, playing the teenage boy Cherubino, gets a big laugh when her voice breaks. Bass Graeme Danby as Bartolo gets so carried away at one point, he leaves the ground - **The Irish Independent**

Suzanne Murphy's Marcellina was wonderfully catty at the start before transforming in a flash into the dotting mother of the second half and Graeme Danby hilariously hammed up the character of Dr Bartolo - **Bachtrack**

Erraught's whip-smart Susanna is preyed upon by her boss, the Count (Ben McAteer). A vengeful doctor (the nicely hysterical Graeme Danby) is hell-bent on forcing a marriage between his housekeeper (clever Suzanne Murphy) and Figaro - **Exeunt**

Aoife Miskelly conveys the hormone-induced antics of the page, Cherubino, with boyish confusion. John Molloy brings superb comic timing to the role of his nemesis, the gardener Antonio. Suzanne Murphy captures the matronly resolve of the housekeeper Marcellina with

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amusing authority, and Graeme Danby has a bouncing energy as her right-hand man, Bartolo - **The Irish Times**

English National Opera, A Midsummer Night's Dream

It takes some time before the Mechanicals catch fire, but when they do – in a brilliantly directed play within a play – their comic timing is perfect: Bloom, Graeme Danby, Simon Butteriss, Timothy Robinson, Robert Murray, and Jonathan Lemalu all emerge as farceurs to the manner born - **The Independent**

Things looked up in the final act, when the troupe of rustics, led by Joshua Bloom's Bottom and stage-managed by Graeme Danby's Quince, drew appreciative laughter with their am-dram routine - **The Evening Standard**

Outstanding in quality are Soraya Mafi's entrancing Tytania, Joshua Bloom's grandiose Bottom, and the entire team of mechanicals, with Graeme Danby a stalwart Quince but the whole team maximising the comic potential of their scenes - **The Stage**

The others were all effectively and colourfully projected, with Robert Murray's bashful Flute, Graeme Danby's officious Quince, Simon Butteriss's rather overlooked Starveling, Timothy Robinson's delightful Snout and Jonathan Lemalu as an engagingly dim Snug. They had great fun with all the comic business, and frankly, the only way to play the operatic send-up of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' is to play it to the hilt, which they did - **Opera Today**

English National Opera, Jenůfa

There was not a weak link to be found in the cast, with Valerie Reid an unexpectedly touching and most amusing Grandmother Buryja, and Graeme Danby an unusually threatening foreman. Soraya Mafi was a fine Karolka, acting the part with perfectly judged hauteur, as did Natlie Herman as her mother, the Mayor's wife - **Opera Britannia**

Colours are breathtaking in a hard-to-balance score; the harp figures as much here as its Czech counterpart did on the Festival Hall concert platform, leader Janice Graham's violin solos double the impact of Jenůfa's prayer for her

absent child and even the bassoons forge subtle links between Graeme Danby's lecherous Foreman, usually a sympathetic character, and Nicky Spence's Števa as drunken Lothario - **The Arts Desk**

English National Opera, Xerxes

Graeme Danby spun a grand buffo role out of minimal material as Elviro. – **Evening Standard**

Clownish baritone Graeme Danby playing Arsamenes' obliging servant Elviro, personifies opera buffo disguised as a flower-hawker in Act II – **Times Literary Supplement**

The bass role of Elviro, servant to Xerxes's brother Arsamenes - taken here by the sturdyvoiced Graeme Danby, in self-mocking mode – **The Independent**

Graeme Danby brings warmth, humour and a lovely tone to his Elviro – **The Guardian**

Graeme Danby rightly contrasted in tone and character as the servant Elviro to explore the comic possibilities that Handel allows for – **Seen and Heard International**

Irish National Opera, Il barbiere di Siviglia

Despite Graeme Danby's Dr Bartolo looking thoroughly disreputable and sleazy (aided by the bling jewellery, white suit, dark shirt and light-coloured sunglasses) he gave an illuminating performance. He blustered convincingly with stunningly clear diction and like his rival, Almaviva, he too possessed the comic touch. His forthright rejection of Basilio's cunning plan was hilarious as was his falsetto singing in Act II - **The Arts Desk**

Graeme Danby's sonorous bass voice as Bartolo proved surprisingly supple in his patter numbers - **Irish Examiner**

Gavan Ring's Figaro is also commanding and he is resourceful, witty and quick, while Graeme Danby's Bartolo presents himself as a worthy opponent rather than a feeble foil - **The Irish Times**

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Doctor Bartolo (Graeme Danby) runs the 'Bartolo Music Studio' with all the bullying venom associated with the darker end of the music industry - **The Golden Plec**

Opera North, The Mikado

Graeme Danby and George Humphreys as Pooh-Bah and Pish-Tush showed us how important it is to sing Sullivan as if it were Donizetti, as well as creating believable civil servants - **The Lark**

Anthony Gregory is a small-voiced Nanki-Poo but looks the part, while Graeme Danby is a fine Pooh-Bah, whose multi-tasking as chancellor of the exchequer and lord chief justice may have triggered a few ideas for the head of the civil service Sir Jeremy Heywood, who was sitting in the stalls on the first night - **The Guardian**

Slightly more subtle in the humour department, we had Graeme Danby's Pooh-Bah (Lord High Everything Else), while George Humphreys was an amiable Pish-Tush - **Bachtrack**

A word, too for Rachael Lloyd's beautifully sung Pitti-Sing; she understandably turns the head of Graeme Danby's deadpan Pooh-Bah - **What's On Stage**

Bass Graeme Danby makes a superb poker-faced Pooh-Bah, born with a sneer - **The Arbutarian**

Graeme Danby is splendidly self-important as Pooh-Bah, Lord High Everything Else - **The Express**

Perhaps this production has sported more fearsome Katishas than Yvonne Howard, but she was enjoyable nonetheless, while Graeme Danby and George Humphreys ably filled out the cast as Pooh-Bah and Pish-Tush respectively - **Seen & Heard International**

With solid support from Graeme Danby as a supercilious Pooh-Bah and George Humphreys as Pish-Tush there were vocal delights aplenty - **Music OMH**

Graeme Danby continuously delighted as Pooh-Bah, the man born of station so high he can trace his lineage back to pre-Adamite protoplasmic sludge. Together with an entertaining George Humphreys as the nobleman Pish-Tush, they rounded out a cast that worked wonderfully as an ensemble - **Opera Britannia**

The serious and hard-nosed Pooh-Bah aka 'Lord High Everything Else' is performed by bass singer Graeme Danby. He also raises some eyebrows with his towering voice whilst shuffling along to the moves of the three sisters. One can imagine he has the toughest job out of the entire cast, playing more than ten important roles, at the same time - **London Theatre 1**

Opera North, La fanciulla del west

In support, Graeme Danby's authoritative Mr. Ashby (of Wells Fargo) and Bonaventura Bottone's sympathetic Nick the bartender are both admirable - **What's On Stage**

The smaller roles – especially Bonaventura Bottone's bartender Nick, Graeme Danby's Wells Fargo agent, Ashby, and Eddie Wade's Sonora – are just as sharply defined - **The Guardian**

Lesser roles are finely taken too. Bonaventura Bottone's lively bartender, Graeme Danby's stiff-necked Wells Fargo sleuth, Eddie Wade's authoritative Sonora, a leading miner, Callum Thorpe and Kathryn Walker as the native American couple, all lend depth to the central trio - **The York Press**

Eddie Wade delivers a powerful performance as Sonora and Graeme Danby is a burley Ashby, the Wells Fargo agent - **Opera Britannia**

Opera North, Albert Herring

Graeme Danby's physical bulk and gravelly bass, with just a hint of PC Plod comic undertones, appropriately embodies the uniformed arm of the law, Superintendent Budd - **Opera Britannia**

Darker pleasures come from observing the other locals - Graeme Danby's policeman exudes slow-moving, witless heaviness, and William Dazeley's oleaginous vicar is a treat - **The Arts Desk**

Graeme Danby's impeccably stolid village bobby - **The Times**

William Dazeley and Mary Hegarty shine as vicar and schoolmistress, with Graeme Danby, Joseph Shovelton, Fiona Kimm and Elizabeth Sikora as the other village worthies - **The Financial Times**

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...the committee of local dignitaries – Mary Hegarty, William Dazeley, Graeme Danby, Joseph Shovelton – was nicely etched - **The Daily Telegraph**

The remaining characters are equally well differentiated...Graeme Danby a jovial local bobby - **The York Press**

English National Opera, Carmen

Graeme Danby filled out the role of Zuniga with conviction - **Classical Source**

The cigarette girls emerge from the factory, and stoically endure the taunts of the squaddies led by a swaggering Zuniga (Graeme Danby) - **The Independent**

Graeme Danby and Duncan rock made great impressions as Zuniga and Morales respectively; it would have been well-nigh impossible to distinguish between the distinction of their vocal and acting performances - **Seen and Heard International**

It has to be admitted that the loss of so much dialogue had a distinctly reductive effect on the comprimario parts such as Morales and Zuniga and the important relationships between them and Jose have to be taken as read. Despite this both Duncan rock and Graeme Danby gave suitably memorable and repellent characterisations - **Opera Britannia**

While a genuinely intimidating Graeme Danby is the lewd and gruff Zuniga - **The Arts Desk**

London Symphony Orchestra, Higglety Pigglety Pop/Where the Wild Things Are

They could certainly co-opt this excellent cast, in which the all the secondary roles are vividly taken. Graeme Danby's bass stands out in both shows, while Claire Booth's Max and Lucy Schauer's Jennie are superb - **The Stage**

Spotlit roles for Susanna Andersson (Baby), Booth again (Mother), Christopher Lemmings (Cat), Graeme Broadbent (Lion) and Graeme Danby (Pig) supported a luminous central performance by Lucy Schauer as Jennie - **What's On Stage**

All members of the two casts, however, were richly deserving of praise, a particular favourite of

mine Graeme Danby's surreal, apparently innocent Pig-in-Sandwich-Boards. These performances came across as true *company* efforts, a state of affairs doubtless deepened by 'experience' in Aldeburgh and Los Angeles - **Boulezian**

Royal Opera Covent Garden Linbury Studio, The Blackened Man

Armstrong is the most interesting character, and brilliantly sung by Graeme Danby: a revolutionary who is against the strike — “not strikes but burning” — he tries to prevent a row between Will and the magistrate before wiggling out himself – **The Times**

Graeme Danby an imposing Ralph Armstrong. – **The Observer**

English National Opera, I Capuletti e I Montecchi

Graeme Danby is a noble Lorenzo – **The Guardian**

Graeme Danby was a sympathetic Lorenzo – **The Times**

Basses Graeme Danby, as Lorenzo, and Brindley Sherratt, as Capellio, made their own considerable marks – **The Evening Standard**

Graeme Danby's Friar gently consoled in that character's ineffectual way – **The Financial Times**

Graeme Danby was sympathetic as Lorenzo, the doctor who combines the functions of Juliet's nurse and Friar Laurence – **concertonet.com**

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