



Benjamin Luxon

Sandisfield, MA

“I’m a wave rider,” says Benjamin Luxon. “I ride the waves life has sent my way.” A classical baritone soloist, Luxon sang around the world: lieder, oratorio, and opera with the world’s leading symphonies, conductors and opera houses. Ben was twice forcibly retired, however, by a devastating health issue – deafness.

Born and raised in Cornwall, England, Ben moved to London to study teaching where he sang informally. Someone suggested he apply to the London Guildhall School of Music and Drama and he was accepted. His robust classical musical career began.

Suddenly in 1990 the first life wave hit. He lost hearing in one ear and retired at age 53. Ben, however, continued to work with conductors who knew him. Then in 1994 while working on “The War Requiem” with Robert Shaw, the second life wave hit. Hearing loss in his remaining ear forced his complete retirement as a singer.

In 2000, Ben moved to the United States, settling in Sandisfield, Massachusetts. He busied himself gardening, splitting 4-5 cords of wood a year, and devising performances and poetry readings. In 2007 he received a cochlear implant and he was off riding his second life wave. While singing was off the table, his magnificent baritone was put to good use in dramatic readings and theatre.

For Sandisfield’s 250th anniversary in 2012, Ben wrote, directed and staged the “Pageant of Sandisfield,” involving over 20 local people in the production. The Sandisfield Players, a community theater group, was born. They now stage two productions a year. Ben writes, directs, raises money and, along with others, builds sets and manages props. Local children always have a large place in the productions. In 2016, Ben took 36 Sandisfield Players in his production of *Our Town* across the Atlantic to perform at the Minack Theater, the famous open-air theater in Cornwall, England.

Now, at 82, Ben is turning Stravinsky’s “The Soldier’s Tale” into a one-man show. Ben’s philosophy, “Work is salvation!”

Photography: Peter Levine

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