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## **Interview : One of two : Finance to Music/David John Pike, ex Deloitte Partner now Baritone for hire**

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By Dina Medland

It took 40 years for David John Pike to recognise that what he really wanted to do was sing for a living. But it has taken the Canadian-born baritone less than six years to establish a reputation as an operatic and concert soloist, release a CD, and be picked by British Airways to reach an audience of millions via its in-flight entertainment. Whither Must I Wander, a compilation of English songs on CD brought out by independent classical record label Signum Classics in early December, includes Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Songs of Travel", potentially a fitting theme tune to Mr Pike's career odyssey.

Since he walked away from his full-time life as a Deloitte partner in 2007, after having worked in three of the "big four" accountancy firms, he has spent a lot of time travelling and building a network of contacts, coaches and "big names" in the musical sphere.

In December, Mr Pike was in London en route from his Luxembourg home to Florida to work with Sherrill Milne, the American baritone, in preparation for a debut performance with Pacific Opera Victoria in Canada as Scarpia in Puccini's Tosca.

From there, it was on to his childhood home in Kingston, Ontario, where he once sang in school and church choirs, inspired by a mother who was a singer, a choir director and a teacher. No journey has a sole purpose: the Canada trip included a chance for further auditions, interviews and a showcase performance for a publicist.

His itinerary is filling up, with performances at Guildford cathedral in the UK in February, Germany in March, back to Canada in April/May and Luxembourg in June, as his "singing CV" grows.

It is a far cry from his other CV, which describes him as "a finance, IT and risk management professional with a combination of in-depth business and technology knowledge, arising from over 20 years experience..."

As Mr Pike puts it: "The nice thing about being a bean counter is that you can always come back to it if you want to."

While working for Deloitte as partner in enterprise risk services in Switzerland – commuting for four years from Luxembourg where his partner lives – he also started working with “a wonderful singer, a basso profundo who was the latest in a long line of teachers who kept asking me ‘but why aren’t you singing?’”

This time, he asked himself the same question: “I love making money, both the pursuit of it and the technical challenge – but you start to realise that today’s profit is just what it is, and loyalty to a company isn’t all that there is either.”

His finance world CV also describes him as an “entrepreneurial, results-driven, team developer, and proven deliverer” – all traits he displayed by quitting Deloitte for a singing career while also setting up his own consultancy business, The Professionals Network, based in Luxembourg.

He continues to prove that he is comfortable in “multi-cultural, multi-lingual and international environments”. From early days as an amateur singer at the University of Toronto, encouraged by composer William Perry at the Royal Conservatory of Music, he found his way to London and “a bunch of folk who were also doing it as a hobby on the side”.

Today he is keen to embrace the “Englishness” he claims from his grandparents, and now his patriality. It was through his exposure to music in London, with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the London Philharmonic, the ENO Opera Works programme and a chorus role at Glyndebourne in 2009, that it all came together for him.

“In the English situation you could have City lawyers singing alongside competent professional musicians – there is a real choral tradition – whereas in Swiss groups there were mostly professionals,” he says.

Having worked under the direction of leading musicians, including Sir Simon Rattle and Sir Neville Marriner, he says: “I had been encouraged repeatedly but I had never had the guts – and then suddenly it felt as if it would be stupid to let it all pass by.”

In June 2011, when he received rave reviews for his debut as Marcello in Puccini’s La Bohème in Bamberg, Germany, it became clear he was not going to let that happen.

## **Secret CV**

### **Any mentors?**

In Toronto, Yezdi Pavri, the Deloitte partner who I could always trust for the right advice.

### **Your first big break**

Working with American bass Daniel Lewis Williams of the Bayerische Staatsoper – he told me if I didn't sing it would be a sin.

**Best career advice to others**

Don't sell yourself short.

ends