



DO
THE DORSET OPERA
FESTIVAL
MMXXII

Anna Patalong who sings Manon Lescaut



The Return of the Native...

We were exceedingly lucky to have the hugely talented opera chorus supremo, Stephen Harris, as our Chorus Director in 2019 and 2021. Stephen is taking a sabbatical this year so, in his place, as our guest Chorus Director, we welcome back one of Stephen's famed predecessors, Nicolas Mansfield!

Nicolas is one of our vice presidents and has visited frequently since relinquishing the chorus director's job several years ago. Having now retired from his post as Artistic Director of the Netherlands' Nationale Reisopera, he has a little more time on his hands and happily accepted our suggestion that he might like to take on the task for 2022.

This year's assistant chorus master is no less impressive! Christopher Middleton studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama at the same time as our Artistic Director (although the latter is considerably older, of course)! Chris has recently retired to Dorset having held several major posts in the opera industry including that of assistant chorus master at the Royal Opera House. So, we feel he is eminently suitable to be joining Mr Mansfield...

Welcome Bottriell Adams as a corporate sponsor

We are delighted to welcome the Chartered Financial Planners, Bottriell Adams, as a new Corporate Sponsor. For many years, the experts in financial management have been long term supporters of Dorset Opera but, under Gary Bottriell, they have now decided to join Duke's and Humphries Kirk as official corporate sponsors of your favourite summer opera festival.

We wholeheartedly welcome them into the Dorset Opera family!

Dates for your diary...

Don't miss this year's Platinum Ritzy Tea Party on Saturday 11th June. If there are any seats left, you won't want to forego Simon Rees' Bluffers' Lunch on 23rd June and for a special occasion you need to be part of our evening at the home of Lord and Lady Fellowes on Thursday 30th June.

The other musts are the annual Fireworks Fiesta on 18th August and, of course, our Celebrity Lunch at the Purbeck Golf Club on Thursday 15th September. All these events and more are now bookable through dorsetopera.com. Check the enclosed Events' Diary for all other dates.



Kate Royal is our recitalist

Lyric soprano Kate Royal, who was educated at Talbot Heath School in Bournemouth, is our recitalist in the Elder Concert Hall at 16.00, on Thursday, 28 July. We are reliably informed that Kate appeared in the chorus of Dorset Opera back in our Sherborne days...

She attended the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the National Opera Studio, graduating in 2004 - the year she also won the Kathleen Ferrier competition. That summer she attracted further attention when she jumped in for the scheduled soprano in a performance of *Die Zauberflöte (The Magic Flute)* at Glyndebourne.

Kate is married to the actor and singer, Julian Ovenden - who regularly appears in music theatre productions in the West End and on Broadway. They have two children.

Farewell to the DO bus!

Whether collecting choristers and their luggage from Salisbury station or transporting clothing rails and props from our stores, our eight-seater black Toyota Previa - emblazoned with the Dorset Opera logo - has been a godsend over its 28-year lifetime. But sadly, the vehicle is no more.

The 'big end' got up and went a year ago, and even though the beloved vehicle still starts first time, it is firmly rooted to the spot and (whisper it quietly) is awaiting the scrappage lorry! There is doubt that it would even be wanted for parts anymore...

So, farewell trusty friend. You were worth every penny of the £19,400 paid for you back in 1994... and you were only ever on loan to Dorset Opera!





We warmly welcome Rosamond Cassidy as new FODO Chairman

In the last edition of DONews, we bid a very fond farewell to Dame Dione Digby as the founder and Chairman of the organisation she so wisely set up to support the fledgling Dorset Opera back in 1982. In that article, we promised you an introduction to her successor (and near neighbour), Rosamond Cassidy.

Rosamond began her professional career as a maritime lawyer in the City of London. In 1980 she joined her husband-to-be for a short holiday in Hong Kong and, during her visit, she decided to call in on various law firms specialising in maritime litigation. To cut a long story short, she was offered the opportunity to work in Hong Kong as a shipping lawyer.

Initially it was their intention to stay for three years. However,

when they finally left Hong Kong in September 2019, almost 40 years had passed. Whilst she was in Hong Kong, she helped with the Hong Kong Arts Festival, sat on the Board of the Hong Kong Ballet and participated in fundraising for The Hospice in Hong Kong. She tells of what a privilege it was to be able to contribute to a city that she loved so fondly.

During their Hong Kong years, she and her husband, Dennis, kept a lively interest in the Dorset Opera Festival and endeavoured to time their visits to Minterne Magna (where they have had a house since 1988) to coincide with the Festival.

All of which brings Rosamond back to you, the Friends of Dorset Opera. Your numbers have grown exponentially over the years and it is you and our Patrons who make the Festival the success it has become. The Trustees are immensely grateful for your trust and generous support, for which we thank you all. Rosamond is looking forward to getting to know as many of you as possible over the coming years...

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One Gin for Opera

Who doesn't recall our hilarious production of *Le Comte Ory*, back in 2017? Count Ory himself, in all his naughty guises, was brilliantly portrayed by the charismatic Maltese tenor, Nico Darmanin. He was back with us singing Don Ottavio in last year's much-acclaimed, 5-star production of *Don Giovanni*.

Well, following in the long tradition of opera personalities having a food named after them - think what Nelly Melba did for the humble peach and where would Rossini be without his famous Tortedos?.. Nico has branched out and is launching his very own brand of gin!

After much study, Nico discovered that the market was missing a Maltese gin and no one was making it with persimmon - an historic fruit, which is truly special in Japan and places like Indiana in the USA. There are entire festivals dedicated to persimmon but, as luck would have it, no one was making persimmon flavoured gin!

"After contacting several gin makers and working on various recipes to balance the flavour of the gin, we managed to create something truly unique and smooth with a distillery to which I was introduced by an avid opera patron who lives close to Glyndebourne," said Nico. "The main botanicals of the gin are, juniper, kaki (persimmon), ginger (to give it that zing), orange and lemon peel (to give it that Mediterranean zest), angelica root (to balance the other flavours and give it some earthy notes)...finishing it off with two secret ingredients we get specially from Malta!

"We use a special method of vapour to infuse the gin. This gives the product a smoother texture and a better-blended flavour. It is a

long process after macerating the fruits in the alcohol for two weeks, then distilling the spirit, filling the copper baskets above in the still with all those other yummy botanicals that make up the recipe for KAKO GIN.

"The final processes were coming together last July - at the time I was singing Don Ottavio at Dorset Opera! It is so special to me that Kako Gin will be part of Dorset history - a reminder of those beautiful evenings spent at Bryanston.

"The short story on the back of every bottle tells how the gin is the brainchild of a Maltese opera singer, wanting to meld the fervent spirit of Malta with the sophistication of this oriental fruit and just how we set out to create a gin that is synonymous with the vibrant climate of my Mediterranean home. A quintessential Mediterranean dry gin with panache. We would like to think in a humble way that the gin is *subtly sublime*.

"Gin is the only alcoholic drink I can enjoy which allows me to sing beautifully and to the full the day after; basically, because it's a 'clean' alcohol. My love and passion for gin has grown over the years. It is a beverage that gets my creative juices flowing.

"And so to you, dear friends. You will have the opportunity to give my gin the taste test in the Marquee Bar at this year's Dorset Opera Festival! Make sure you stipulate Nico's gin when ordering for, as the BBC is always keen to tell us, other brands are available!"

Nico Darmanin is appearing in *La donna del lago* at this year's Buxton Festival.





Joseph Calleja to sing in Wareham

In what must be the best-kept secret in all opera, that other Maltese tenor, Joseph Calleja, is giving a concert in Wareham on Thursday, 29 June. He will be accompanied by pianist and conductor Stephen Barlow (Mr Joanna Lumley) who is conducting Calleja in performances of *La Gioconda* at Grange Park Opera this summer.

The concert is to raise funds for the venue itself, the Priory Church of Lady St Mary, and it will commence at 19.30. Tickets are available through the Visit Wareham website and but please note, they are unallocated.



Did you miss out on your Cabana this year?

We have had so much demand for the small Indian-style cabanas this year that we've been persuaded to buy another!

Having dealt with the waiting list, we are now able to open up bookings to those who missed out. So, if you've been disappointed and want to accommodate a party of six or less, try booking again now! If it helps, call the box office to make a reservation - otherwise, book online, just as you would tickets.

DO THE DORSET OPERA FESTIVAL M M X X I I

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Giacomo Puccini MANON LESCAUT

25, 28, 30 July at 19:00 | Matinée 27 July at 14:00
Sung in Italian with English surtitles

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart THE MAGIC FLUTE

26, 27, 29 July at 19:00 | Matinée 30 July at 14:00
Sung in English with surtitles

Coade Theatre, Bryanston,
Blandford Forum

Box Office:

dorsetopera.com

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Ensure your visit to the Festival goes smoothly

Bryanston: For SatNav purposes, the postcode is DT11 9LH. The Bryanston campus is private, but it will be open to the public from 17:00 on performance days, 12:30 for the matinées. You and your guests are most welcome to wander around the glorious grounds.

Start & Running Times: Evening performances will start at 19:00, matinées start at 14:00. Performances will be approximately 185 minutes long. This includes the dinner interval of 45-50 minutes. Wednesday and Saturday performances. After Wednesday and Saturday's Matinée performances, we would respectfully ask you to leave the campus shortly after the performance in order to make way for evening patrons.

The Marquee Bar: will be sited inside the marquee on the lawns not far from the car park and will be selling a range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks including champagne by Pol Roger, Pimms, Nico's gin, wines, teas and coffee. The bar will be open from 17:00 for evening performances and from 12:30 for the matinées. If you have pre-ordered a picnic or afternoon tea please collect these from the marquee bar. To avoid misunderstandings, you will need to present the appropriate catering ticket or email receipt.

Marquee Table and Chair Reservations: If you are bringing your own picnic or pre-ordering one of our hampers and want to eat it in the marquee, you would be advised to reserve chairs or tables. Book online via the box office at dorsetopera.com

Picnicking: Many Dorset Opera-goers now bring picnics to eat before the performance or during the interval. In the twilight, Bryanston's lawns look resplendent dotted with tables sporting glittering lights and, in some cases, candelabra! Tables and chairs are available for picnickers on the lawns and inside the marquee. For those who don't want to go to the trouble of preparing food, *Eat in Style* picnic hampers are available to order through dorsetopera.com. For those who prefer to take pot luck, a certain amount of food can be purchased on the day. Champagne, wines, soft drinks and hot beverages are also available from the marquee bar. In the unlikely event of rain, picnickers are welcome to take their food into the marquee or the Sanger Building which can be found immediately in front of the theatre.

Afternoon Tea: At the matinées, our hospitality partner *Eat in Style* offer a full afternoon tea with sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and preserves, cakes and a choice of tea or coffee. This has proved extremely popular, but you will need to pre-order.

Formal Dining: For those who prefer a more complete dining experience, the Dorset Opera Festival offers a full 4 course dinner at 17:45 at Friday and Saturday evening performances. Take two courses before the opera and return to your tables for the rest of the meal during the Long Interval. Wines included. To see the menu go to

the Your Visit tab at dorsetopera.com and book via the box office.

Car Parking: Please drive with care on the Bryanston campus and park as indicated by the marshals. Disabled persons' parking spaces are found near the entrance to the Coade Theatre. Please display your disabled permit and ask the marshals to guide you to designated parking. We would ask you to take extra care when driving on grass in the car park areas - especially if it has been raining.

Wheelchair Access: Limited facilities do exist for wheelchair users. Wheelchairs are not permitted into the auditorium without a pre-booked space.

Dress Code: Some of our audience do wear evening dress, but we most certainly do not insist upon it. You should be aware that the theatre does get very warm; please wear clothing in which you will be comfortable.

For other information please call 01258 840000.

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