



DO
THE DORSET OPERA
FESTIVAL
MMXVII

Where's the devil in you?

Our cover picture shows the remarkable Mark S Doss in one of his signature roles, that of Méphistophélès in Gounod's *Faust*. He has 'taken on the Devil' in over 160 performances and is regarded as one of the world's greatest exponents of the character. Mark returns to Dorset this year as the lynchpin of Christopher Cowell's new production.

Writing in *The Spectator* after last year's *Macbeth*, critic Dr Michael Tanner said of Doss: '...a performance in all respects worthy of an international opera house. [Doss]... is clearly a major artist. Whatever charisma is, he has it to spare, looks marvellous, acts powerfully and has the most impressive bass-baritone voice I have come across in years. Dorset can congratulate itself on having him as the riveting central figure in this great work.'

Mark is joined by Anna Patalong as Marguerite. Anna makes a welcome return having delighted our audiences with her portrayal of Tatyana in last year's *Eugene Onegin*. Making his UK debut in the title role will be Spanish tenor Alejandro del Cerro, while New Zealander Nicholas Lester sings Marguerite's ill-fated brother, Valentin. Go to our website for more of our exciting cast for *Faust* and *Le Comte Ory*.

Can you afford to miss this thrilling opera? Get a ticket by whatever means you can to witness what promises to be one of the great performances in our history. Tickets in the centre section of the theatre are sold out for every show. They are still available elsewhere in the theatre - but hurry, they will be snapped up as soon as this newsletter hits the doormat.

We look forward to welcoming you to Bryanston.

Box Office (tickets; hampers; dinners): 01202 499199
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Dorset Opera News | Spring 2017 | Issue 24



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'I think of a leisurely lunch midweek as a pleasantly naughty thing to do, stealing a little time for a change with lots of lively chat enjoying good food and a light bottle of French white wine – maybe a bottle of Chateau Bauduc.' *Rick Stein*

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Book now for these forthcoming events...

29 June 2017 | Bluffers' Lunch No.28

Dramaturg Simon Rees and DO Chairman Alan Frost get together to give us the full background to this season's Festival operas. Book via bluffers28.eventbrite.co.uk

17 August 2017 | Wareham by Boat: Fun and Firework Fiesta

Our boat sets sail from Greenslades orange kiosk on Poole Quay at 18:45. Fish & chips will be served and drinks may be purchased on-board. We gradually make our way to Wareham where we can disembark, but we need to keep a north eye on the tide before returning to glide round the more scenic parts of Poole Harbour in time to drop anchor offshore from where we watch the summer fireworks at 22:00. We should be back ashore by 22:30. Tickets: from £25 to include the boat trip and food - £10 of this is a suggested voluntary donation on which Gift Aid will be claimed. Book via dofcruise.eventbrite.co.uk

05 October 2017 | Bluffers' Lunch No.29

The bluffer's favourite, the one and only Adrian Thorpe, joins us once again for another of his unmissable illustrated talks. This one will be entitled *The Fortunes of Faust* and promises to be an enlightening follow-up to our summer productions. Book via bluffers29.eventbrite.co.uk

For further information please visit the Dorset Opera Festival website and click on Events' Diary or call 01258 840000.

We hear that...

In what would be a great Dorset Opera line-up, three of our better known singers are currently appearing together in Britten's *Peter Grimes* in Bologna. **Mark S Doss** (Dutchman; Amonasro; Pizarro; Macbeth) sings Captain Balstrode; **Ian Storey** (John the Baptist *Hérodiade*; Otello) is Peter Grimes and **John Molloy** (Dr Dulcamara *Elisir*) portrays the coroner, Mr Swallow.

Mark S Doss is also headed for the Welsh National Opera! After watching Doss perform on more than one occasion at the Dorset Opera Festival, WNO Artistic Director David Pountney has now lined him up for the evil police chief, Baron Scarpia, in WNO's 2018 performances of *Tosca*. We feel a coach trip coming on...

Luis Chapa (Calaf *Turandot*; Canio *Pagliacci*; Riccardo *Un ballo in maschera*) will sing the role of Pinkerton with Ermonela Jaho in the title role of *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan Opera, New York, next season.

Leonardo Capalbo (Nadir *Pearl Fishers*; Nemorino *Elisir*; Macduff *Macbeth*) is moving 'up the road' to Hampshire for the summer! He sings Don Jose in the new Grange Festival's production of *Carmen* and takes part in their performance of the Verdi *Requiem* - accompanied by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.



John Molloy

Leonardo Capalbo



Mark S Doss

Ian Storey



Luis Chapa



The Lincoln Center



50th Anniversary Gloom at The Met

Elsewhere in this edition of DO News, we mention Glyndebourne's target of 90% seat capacity to enable them to balance their annual budget. Well spare a thought for the 'poor' Metropolitan Opera in New York. Speculation has long been rife that *Live from The Met* broadcasts are doing the company no good whatsoever. New York's operagoers are choosing to watch performances in their local cinema at a fraction of the cost of one of the 4,000 seats in the famous auditorium. Analysis of box office performance for the current season, which is about to come to a close, shows that The Met averaged a dismal 67% of potential capacity to date. That's just 1% up on the 2015-16 all-time low.

When The Met moved to the Lincoln Center in 1966/7, Sir Rudolf Bing - the company's general manager at the time - famously 'complained' that they had so many subscribers, it was almost "impossible to ever buy a single ticket" from the box office!

Today's general manager, Peter Gelb, believes they are witnessing a decline in the subscription model - which was originally formulated by marketing guru, Danny Newman, for the Lyric Opera Chicago in the late 70s. The subscription series involves offering a discount to audience-goers who buy an up-front package of tickets for several performances. Most larger companies operate such a system nowadays.

Meanwhile, the five hour gala (followed by dinner) celebrating The Met's 50th anniversary at Lincoln Center on 7 May, raised an impressive \$8 million: a drop in the ocean for a company with an annual budget close to \$300 million.



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Singers making their DOF debuts this summer...



Simon Mechlinski

Simon Mechlinski

Raimbaud in *Le Comte Ory*

We welcome Simon Mechlinski, another UK debutant this year. He is amazingly young, but has a stunning velvet-smooth baritone voice. He studies with the great Italian baritone, Giorgio Zancanaro, and is already in demand in his native Poland. He has performed *Fiorello*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *The Clock in L'enfant et les Sortilèges*, *Marcello in La bohème* as well as ambitiously understudying the title role in Verdi's *Macbeth*. We are stealing a bit of a march on Glyndebourne here because Simon is scheduled to make his debut there in the 2018 season!



Alejandro del Cerro

Alejandro del Cerro

Faust in *Faust*

Alejandro makes his UK debut singing the title role in *Faust*. He has previously sung the role in Oviedo (where Mark S Doss has also sung Méphistophélès) but they didn't appear in the same performances! He has performed *Arturo in Lucia di Lammermoor* in Pamplona; debuted in the Teatro de la Zarzuela in *La Tempranica* under the baton of Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos; *The Legend of Kiss*, *The Guest of Seviliano* and *Katiuska* in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Malcolm in *Macbeth* in Córdoba and he has recently sung in Verdi's opera *I vespri siciliani* at the Teatro Real, Madrid.



Jennifer France

Jennifer France

Countess Adèle in *Le Comte Ory*

Nominated in the Young Artist Category at the 2017 International Opera Awards and for The Outstanding Achievement in an Operatic Role for the 2017 *WhatsOnStage* Opera Poll, and has received so many awards that it's impossible to list them all here. Suffice it to say, she is in such constant demand everywhere that we at the Dorset Opera Festival consider ourselves extremely lucky to have caught a window in her frantic schedule. You will be hearing a lot more of Jennifer France in years to come - and you will adore her as La Comtesse Adèle. Her star is very much in the ascendency.



Nico Darmanin

Nico Darmanin

Comte Ory in *Le Comte Ory*

The young Maltese tenor is fast establishing himself in the bel canto repertoire and the title role in *Le Comte Ory* will be right up his street. He made his Royal Opera House debut as Daniéli in Verdi's *Les vêpres siciliennes* and returned as Apparition of a Youth in Richard Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten*. He also had successful debuts with Scottish Opera (Ramiro *La Cenerentola*), with Welsh National Opera (Almaviva *Il barbiere di Siviglia*) and for De Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp (The Italian Tenor *Der Rosenkavalier*) and has recently been singing Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* at the Nederlandse Reisopera.



New Deputy Chairman



The Dorset Opera board is delighted to announce the appointment of Garry Batt as its new Deputy Chairman.

Garry has a lifelong interest in classical music in general, but opera and lieder in particular. His knowledge of opera is quite astounding. He will disconcertingly pepper a conversation with a pertinent quote from almost any opera - impressively, in the original language!

Born in Yorkshire, Garry has worked in Dorset for over 30 years. He has a degree in Law but his vocation clearly lay elsewhere. He is now a partner with Duke's - Dorset's auctioneers in Dorchester - where his specialities are 18th century English ceramics and 20th century paintings. It is generally agreed that auctions with Garry behind the gavel, provide some of the best entertainment in the county!

His home is in the picturesque Cerne Valley where he lives with his wife Louise, three children and numerous horses. He is quite bashful about his equestrian talents - but they are obviously considerable. His sporting prowess extends to skiing and hitting the Atlantic surf near his Cornish hideaway.

He is a revered chairman of governors at Thomas Hardy School in Dorchester - the largest school in Dorset with the biggest integrated sixth form in the UK.

Alan Frost, Chairman, said he was delighted that the appointment had been made. "Garry has been a good friend to Dorset Opera for the past few years, is a very keen opera buff, and most importantly is a wise and experienced businessman."

Of his association with Dorset Opera thus far Garry says, "I was very keen to become involved with Dorset Opera and I am utterly convinced of the brilliance of what we achieve not only for our young participants but for our ferociously loyal supporters and audiences."

Stop Press...

Bluffers' Lunches make the Daily Mail - read David Mellor's article on the best of country house opera this summer:
<http://dailym.ai/2q03yE6>



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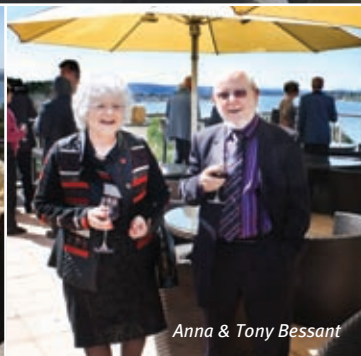
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Roderick Kennedy & Gus Christie



Mike & Margi Jennings



Anna & Tony Bessant



Sylvia Sexton, Kelyvn Derrick OBE & Roger Dew



Derek Patrick & Giles Harvey

Celebrity Haven

The weather for our 2017 Celebrity Lunch at the Harbour Heights Hotel in April, could not have been better.

Glyndebourne's Executive Chairman, Gus Christie, was our very warm and relaxed guest, and 83 Dorset Opera supporters were fascinated by his anecdotes about the world's first and most famous opera festival of which he took charge in 2000.

Gus is the third Christie to head the organisation started by his grandfather in 1934. He told us a great deal about the workings of today's company which, this year, has a budget exceeding £27 million.

It is astonishing to learn that their finely tuned budget requires ticket sales to exceed 90%, and that mounting two 'new' works in a season (*Hipermestra* and *Hamlet*) is of slight concern to him. In the past, one new work was more than enough!

On the question of the new Grange Park Opera, at West Horsley Place in Surrey, Gus is unconcerned by the extra competition. He says: "It's no bad thing. Glyndebourne was the first country house opera. Many have sprung up since, and that's a form of flattery!"



Dorset Opera Outreach

Faust given new life by Dorset Pupils



John & Margrette Jones

Through the generous philanthropy of Patrons John and Margrette Jones, the Dorset Opera Festival and Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne were able to team up in a 5-day Opera Outreach residency involving 45 talented students.

DOF Outreach aims to give young people an introduction to opera, to bring it alive and make it relevant to them in the 21st century. Having taken *Faust* as their theme, the students deconstructed the opera, created new lyrics, composed new music, and performed some sections from Gounod's score, in the original French. Pupils will be given exclusive access to our dress rehearsals in July.

The participants were put through their paces by pianist, presenter and composer Dominic Harlan, opera singer and animator Lynsey Docherty, with cellist and baritone Matthew Sharp - all leaders in their field.



Pupils from Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne

The resultant performance at the end of the 5-day residency was a world premiere based on the themes of *Faust* - disillusionment, desire, temptation, love and the idea of good eventually triumphing over evil. Their work was staged with spellbinding choreography, complete with an 8-piece band, which enabled talent to shine from students who might never have had such an opportunity before.

Lynsey, who is on the board of Dorset Opera, said of the project, 'Creating opera with young people allows them to develop skills they never knew they had. It is abundantly clear from the resulting piece how the arts stimulate and encourage creativity, communication, cooperation, confidence and self-expression that are vital for young people as they develop into adulthood. Creating their own work validates their ideas, and giving them a glimpse into the world of opera, how singers create sound and the professional and focussed work behind staging such an art form has been revolutionary for the students.'

Steve Glover, Director of Music at Queen Elizabeth's School said, 'I'm so very proud of our students, their intense creativity and commitment to the project, and I was genuinely gobsmacked by both the amount and quality of the resulting performance. They've all learned so much from Lynsey, Dominic and Matthew, and everyone here is absolutely delighted with the outcome.'

DOF Artistic Director Roderick Kennedy stated, 'We were stunned with what these young people were able to achieve in just 5 days of intensive work. A most exciting and fulfilling project. I look forward to the possibility of taking our Opera Outreach programme into other schools around the county - and to having QE pupils join us for our dress rehearsals at Bryanston in July. Our ongoing task is to entice some of them to join the chorus of the 2018 Festival.'

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25, 27 July at 19:00

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Ritzy Tea Party time...

This year's Ritzy Tea Party is held at the kind invitation of Dorset Opera Patron and former High Sheriff, Mrs Jennifer Coombs DL, on Saturday 17 June and takes place in the grounds of her magnificent Grade I-listed home, Stepleton, near Blandford Forum.

Our famous yellow and white striped marquee will be set up close to the ornamental lake, and you are encouraged to explore the grounds including the walled garden. Please remember this is a private home and you will not have access to Stepleton House itself.

Our annual Ritzy Tea Parties are renowned for their mountains of mouth-watering food including sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and preserves, cakes and gateaux, followed by our fabulous 'Fizz Finale' involving strawberries & cream and bubbly! As usual, we hope to have fun with good friends in order to raise funds for bursaries to assist some of the young singers that participate in the Dorset Opera Festival.

Stepleton is situated on the A350 near the Hanford and Child Okeford turning. For SatNav users, the postcode is DT11 8PR. The entrance will be sparsely signposted with DO logo signs and you are asked to arrive in good time, as the gates will be closed just after 15:30. Please park where designated by the marshals. A small amount of disabled parking is available for wheelchair users.

Suggested ticket price: £17.50 per person (£10 of which is a donation on which Gift Aid will be claimed). Time: 15:30 - 18:30. (Do let us know if you have special dietary requirements.)

It is imperative that we should know you will be attending. Please purchase your tickets online via Eventbrite at least a week before.

FODO raises its grant...

For the second year running, the Trustees of the Friends of Dorset Opera are delighted to report that the organisation is able to make a grant of £23,000 to the Dorset Opera Festival in support of this year's operas and summer school in July. This is an increase of £1,500 on the 2016 grant and is made possible by a healthy intake of new Friends as well as the excellent response by longstanding Friends to the increase in subscriptions, for which the Trustees are most grateful.

In addition, the Chairman, Lady Digby, with the assistance of the Trustees, arranged a private recital at Minterne specifically for the Patrons of Dorset Opera. This concert, which took place on March 21st, included a programme of songs given by the lyric baritone Richard Frewer, accompanied by David Price at the piano. They performed to a full house which raised £2,567 and this will be presented to the Dorset Opera Festival as a separate grant to be put towards the work of our esteemed young Chorus Master, Benjamin Goodson, at the 2017 Festival.

Arts Council England

We are delighted to acknowledge that Arts Council England - via the National Lottery fund - has again awarded the Dorset Opera Festival a substantial grant this year.

Dorset Opera is a Registered Charity No: 1105318 and
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Ensure your visit to the Dorset Opera Festival goes smoothly

Bryanston: For SatNav purposes the postcode is DT11 0PX. The Bryanston campus is private, but it will be open to the public from 17.00 on performance days (12.30 for the Saturday matinee.) You and your guests are most welcome to wander round the glorious grounds.

Start & Running Times: Evening performances will start at 19.00. The Saturday matinee starts at 14.00. Performances will be approximately 185 minutes long. This includes the dinner interval of 45-50 minutes. Saturday performances: We would respectfully ask Saturday matinee audience-goers 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 alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks including champagne by Pol Roger, wines, teas and coffee. The bar will be open from 17.00 for evening performances and from 12.30 for the matinee. If you have ordered a Dorset Opera picnic or afternoon tea please collect these from the marquee bar. To avoid misunderstandings you will need to present the appropriate catering ticket.

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, mini picnic hampers are available to order for collection at the performance of your choice. For those who prefer to take pot luck, a certain amount of food can be purchased 'on the night'. 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 matinee, our hospitality partner The Salt Pig of Wareham & Swanage, 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 through the box office.

Formal Dining: For those who prefer a more complete dining experience, the Dorset Opera Festival offers a full 4/5 course opera dinner at 17.45 at Friday and Saturday evening performances only. Take two courses before the opera, and return to your tables for the rest of the meal during the Long Interval. Wines included. To order, please call the box office on 01202 499199 (you will require

your seat numbers). Alternatively, for further information, please call Dorset Opera on 01258 840000.

Car Parking: Please drive with care on the Bryanston campus and park as indicated by the marshals. If one of your guests is disabled, there are parking spaces nearer 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. Patrons must have informed the box office of their need for a wheelchair space when booking tickets.

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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Dining at Dorset Opera

Once again our catering partner at this year's Dorset Opera Festival is the famous Salt Pig delicatessen and cafés in Wareham and Swanage. Famed for their succulent and sought-after fayre, they are offering two picnic hamper options at each performance as well as an afternoon tea hamper at the Saturday matinee.

- **The Salt Pig Picnic Hamper** offers a Watercress & Coastal Cheddar Quiche; Sandwiches of Victor's Smoked Salmon & cream Cheese and White Park Beef with Horseradish; Cheese Board of Smoked Dorset Red, Somerset Brie, Crackers & Grapes; Strawberries & Cream, all for £17 per person
- **The Salt Pig Luxury Picnic Hamper** contains all the above plus half a Kimmeridge Bay Lobster, Salad with Lemon & Dill dressing and Chocolate Torte & Cream (instead of Strawberries) at £28 per person
- **The Salt Pig Afternoon Tea Hamper** offers a Sandwich Selection; Scone with Clotted Cream & Preserve; Cakes, and a choice of Tea or Coffee for just £12 per person

Whilst some options - including sandwiches - will be available at each performance, operagoers are strongly advised to pre-book their picnic hampers via the box office (01202 499199) or through dorsetopera.com

The Opera Dinner is on the evenings of Friday and Saturday 28 & 29 July. This is served in one of the staterooms of Bryanston House, and offers 4-5 courses (including wine and mineral water) at £53 per person. Menus are available on our website: pre-booking through the box office is essential.



Anna Patalong with Scarlett Rosa

Additions to DO's family

One of the productions in which Anna Patalong has taken part since last year's Dorset Opera Festival (where she stole the show as Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin*), was the birth of her gorgeous baby, Scarlett Rosa. Doting parents Anna and her baritone husband, Benedict Nelson, are 'over the moon' and busy schedules mean that Scarlett will be incredibly well-travelled by the time she goes to school!

Meanwhile, in France, Mathilde Malfait (Hervé) - for many years our Assistant Company Manager - has given birth to bouncing baby Jules. With her husband Loïc, the family introduced many of the Dorset Opera family to Jules on a visit to the UK at Easter. Mathilde returns to DOF this summer where she will look after the accommodation allocation at Bryanston as well as French language coaching for *Faust* and *Le Comte Ory*!



Mathilde & Loïc Malfait with Jules



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Die Zauberflöte (Mozart)

Saturday 18 November (5.55pm) LIVE

The Exterminating Angel (Thomas Adès) -
MET Premiere

Friday 24 November (1.30pm) ENCORE

The Exterminating Angel - MET premiere

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1.30pm – Tickets: £21, £20 (Members) £19 (Concessions)

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Tuesday 26 – Wednesday 27 September

Opera Della Luna

Tales of Offenbach

Croquefer & L'île De Tulipatan by Jacques Offenbach

Sung in English in a completely new version by Jeff Clarke. Opera della Luna return to Poole with two hilarious one-act operas by the French master of comic opera.



CROQUEFER or The Last of the Paladins

Croquefer has abducted the daughter of his arch-rival: Rattlebone, with whom he has been at war for 23 years. Despite having lost most of his body parts, including his tongue, at the Crusades, Rattlebone is determined to fight one last battle to save his daughter. Their bloody final fight-to-the-death is only prevented by the deft interference of Croquefer's aide Fireball, who cunningly poisons the wine, thereby inflicting on all the combatants a devastating and debilitating dose of the squits.

L'île de Tulipatan

On the island of Tulipatan, King Cacatois XXII is unaware that his only son and heir, Alexis, is in fact biologically, his daughter. Knowing how desperate he was for a son, the doctors concealed the child's true sex from the king, who has now grown increasingly despairing of his son's gentle disposition. Coincidentally, in order to avoid her child being conscripted into the army, the wife of the King's Field Marshall has also lied to her husband about their daughter, who is in fact, a boy. How extraordinary it would be if these two bizarrely brought-up children were to meet and somehow fall in love.....

Running Times: First Opera – Approx. 1 hour 5 mins, Interval 20 mins.
Second Opera Approx. 1 hour 10 mins. TOTAL - 2 hours 25 min

7.45pm

Tickets: £24 (Discounts Available)

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