



DO  
THE DORSET OPERA  
**FESTIVAL**  
FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

## 40 Years of Dorset Opera

When HRH The Prince of Wales attended the first performance of what turned out to be the fledgling Dorset Opera in 1974, little did Sherborne schoolteachers Patrick Shelley, Robert Glen and Augusta Miller think they were setting the foundations for an international opera festival.

Now, 40 years on, the 2014 Dorset Opera Festival celebrates the foresight of that triumvirate with a series of performances and events. These include the publication of a coffee table book, an exhibition, our renowned Summer School and six stunning performances of the highest quality opera involving young people and famous soloists from around the world.

The book will tell the story of how Dorset Opera came about and will feature programme details, casts, anecdotes and photographs from participants in every opera production since *The Bartered Bride* in 1974. We hope it will be on sale at our July performances.

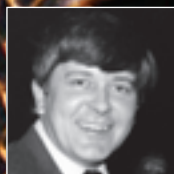
An exhibition covering our 44 productions will be open for viewing at Bryanston from 18th July. It is just one of the scheduled events arranged to complement our ongoing programme of fundraising activities which culminate this autumn in our 40th Anniversary Dinner at the magnificent home of the Earl and Countess of Shaftesbury.

This year's Dorset Opera Festival residency at Bryanston consists of two new productions: four performances of Verdi's most celebratory of all operas, *Aida* (its third incarnation for Dorset Opera after productions in 1977 and 1998) and two performances of Beethoven's only opera, *Fidelio*. Beethoven famously created several overtures for *Fidelio*, and to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the première of the two-act version of his opera - the one we are performing - we will be adding his *Leonore Overture No.3* before the final scene.

At the time of going to press, tickets are still available for all performances - although Thursday, Friday and both Saturday shows are almost sold out.

Dining has always been part of the Dorset Opera Experience, and apart from our 5-course formal Opera Dinners in one of the staterooms of Bryanston House on Friday 25 and Saturday 26 July, luxury picnic hampers and afternoon teas can be ordered to complete your visit to the 40th Anniversary Festival.

Dorset Opera News | Spring 2014 | Issue 18



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Mr &amp; Mrs David Angus

## Senta gets her man!

Stunning Scottish soprano Lee Bisset - who starred as our 'riveting' Senta in last year's production of *The Flying Dutchman* - returns to the Dorset Opera Festival this summer to sing the role of Leonore (Fidelio) in Beethoven's only opera. But Lee took on another starring role just before Christmas - that of the bride at her own wedding! Lee married her very own conductor David Angus, who is Music Director of Boston Lyric Opera in the United States.

Our heartiest congratulations go to Lee and David. We look forward to welcoming Mr & Mrs Angus back to Dorset in July.

“ **Tenor Teaser** - <http://bit.ly/1hSUfiN>  
Type this link into your browser and turn up the volume then check the cast lists on our website [www.dorsetopera.com](http://www.dorsetopera.com) ”

## Please consider becoming a Patron

Did you have difficulty getting your preferred seats for this year's Festival performances? Are you missing out on functions and events organised especially for our Patrons? Are you a Friend of Dorset Opera who might like to become a Patron?

If you are already a Patron but would like to upgrade to a higher Circle or indeed would like to become a member of our Ruby Circle, please contact our Patrons' Secretary, Elspeth Brown on 01725 517581 or send an e-mail headed Patronage to [info@dorsetopera.com](mailto:info@dorsetopera.com) or to Elspeth at [elsp21@gmail.com](mailto:elsp21@gmail.com)

## The Auction | The Results

When Fundraising Committee Chairman Susanne Parkin said she would raise £20,000 over two years, we were intrigued as to how she would go about this. When she suggested holding an auction and explained her thinking, we were captivated. We knew that Susanne had been hugely successful in raising funds in this manner for another charity, so who were we to argue!

Susanne with her splendid team of Christine Bueno, Max Carding, June McAvoey, Lynda Rose, Susannah Selby Bennett and Deirdre and Egerton Skipwith proceeded to acquire auction lots from friends, family and Dorset Opera supporters around the country. Patrons Mr & Mrs Anthony Pitt-Rivers kindly offered their tithe barn at Hinton St Mary as a venue; auctioneers, Duke's of Dorchester were brought on board, and the stage was set for an epic event.

The result was that some £23,000 was taken on the day itself, with two or three major lots that failed to meet their reserve but worth an estimated £5,000 plus, still to be sold at upcoming specialist Fine Arts auctions. When percentage shares, expenses and other outgoings are taken into account, and Gift Aid on donations has been recovered, the final total is expected to be close to a tremendous £15,000.

One of the surprise lots was a 1951 Massey Ferguson tractor. We were slightly sceptical as to whether our particular auction was the right place for such a sale. But with a reserve in place, the tractor became the centre of a bidding war, as many of the gentlemen (and one lady) of the county recalled learning to drive on such a machine!

Our grateful thanks go to Garry Batt and Guy Schwinge and the staff of Duke's for making the whole event possible - to Garry especially for officiating so splendidly on the day itself. To Mr & Mrs Pitt-Rivers for allowing the use of their tithe barn; to Celia Harvey and the Friends of Dorset Opera for supplying refreshments; to the FunCom team for organising the preview and 'policing' the event, and to all our supporters for their untiring support and donations.



1951 Massey Ferguson Tractor

“ *The thrill of being part of something so serious and real, the build-up towards the performances themselves I shall never forget and those fortnights sowed the seeds of a love for music, opera and the performing arts which has stayed with me ever since.* ”

Tara Palmer Tomkinson





Bruce &amp; Susannah Selby Bennett | Slepe Green Barn

## Bluffing their way to £6K

Dorset Opera Board member and Patron Susannah Selby Bennett and her husband Bruce, have been responsible for hosting our phenomenally successful Bluffers' Lunches over the past 18 months.

The superbly-equipped barn at their home has played host to a total of eight informative events to date which have become not just a popular feature on the calendar, but a delightful social occasion.

Not only do the Selby Bennetts host these events, but they very kindly supply the wine and food (which is cooked by Susannah herself - with assistance from the 'dessert ladies' Sue Mathews and FunCom chairman, Susanne Parkin).

The final Lunch for this season was held on 22nd May, and featured opera super-guru Simon Rees (former Dramaturg of Welsh National Opera). He now freelances for several companies across the globe, as well as leading tours to distant opera houses, lecturing, and contributing articles to various industry publications. There has been a limit of 40 in the Barn, but somehow Susannah managed to squeeze in 56 for Simon's talk on *Aida* and *Fidelio*, and we had to turn several away!

Through the generosity of our hosts and our speakers - who have kindly donated their services - our Bluffers have helped us raise a very substantial £6,000. And Susannah has just confirmed that she and Bruce are happy for Bluffers' Lunches to continue for the immediate future!

We extend our heartiest thanks to the Selby Bennetts (and Dougal) for making us all so welcome in their delightful home, and look forward to a further five lunches over the next season - beginning in October.

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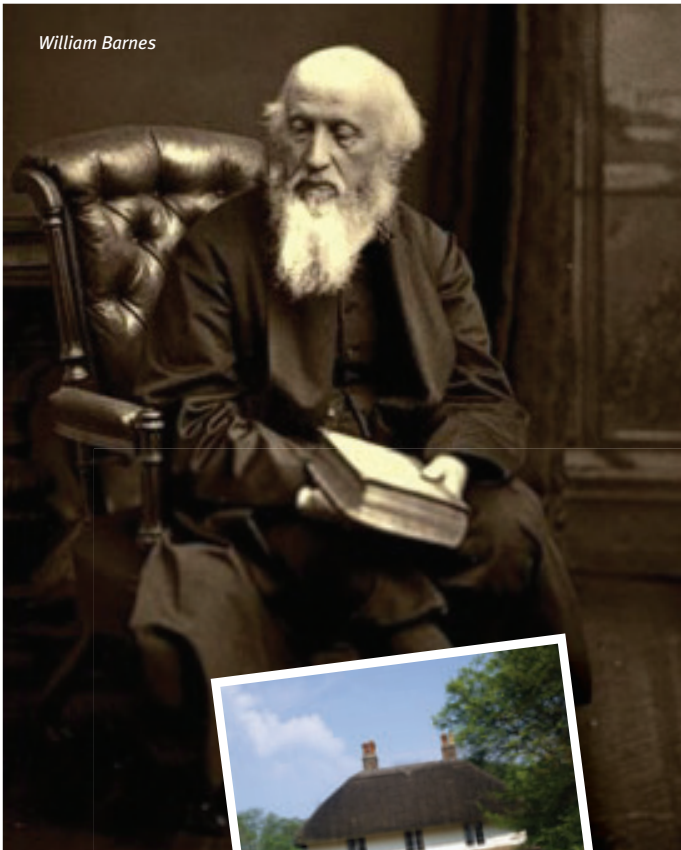
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William Barnes



Old Came Rectory

## Come to Came!

What are you doing on Saturday 14th June? Don't miss our 40th Anniversary Ritzy Tea Party! This year it's being held in the grounds of the exquisite Old Came Rectory at Winterborne Came, near Dorchester, at the kind invitation of owner Warren Davis.

The Rectory is the former home of Dorset poet William Barnes, and in celebration of his tenure and our 40th anniversary, we will be royally entertained in the vernacular by members of the Thomas Hardy Society.

The Ritzy Tea itself will offer the usual sumptuous array of sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and preserves, and a vast selection of cakes all rounded off with strawberries and champagne to see you off on your journey home.

The idyllic gardens of Old Came Rectory will be of particular interest, and Mr Davis encourages you to take a saunter round upon arrival.

Parking will be in the field adjoining the property. When coming from Dorchester, please go past the entrance to the Rectory (where you will see Dorset Opera banners) and take the next left.

Disabled drivers will be able to park nearer the house. Marshals will be on duty to guide you.



St. Giles House

## 40th Anniversary Dinner at the home of the Earl and Countess of Shaftesbury

Unbelievably, our celebration dinner at St Giles House - kindly supported by Duke's of Dorchester - is still awaiting a September or October date. We had hoped that our guest of honour would have confirmed their availability by now, but at the time of going to press, we are holding an unprecedented eight dates open for them!

Almost 300 people have put their names on the waiting list, but priority will clearly be given to Dorset Opera Patrons followed by members of the Friends of Dorset Opera and other key supporters. If you have put your name on the list but are not already a Patron, you might like to consider becoming one?

### Useful DO addresses

**Friends' Secretary:** Mrs Celia Harvey  
Middle House, Powys Green, Sherbourne DT9 3TA  
T: 01935 815883 | [celia.m.harvey@gmail.com](mailto:celia.m.harvey@gmail.com)

**Patrons' Secretary:** Mrs Elspeth Brown  
3 Salisbury Street, Cranborne, BH21 5PU  
T: 01725 517581 | [elsp21@gmail.com](mailto:elsp21@gmail.com)

**Dorset Opera HQ:** Dorset Opera, Witchampton, BH21 5AU  
T: 01258 840000 | [info@dorsetopera.com](mailto:info@dorsetopera.com)

**Registered Office:** Dorset Opera, Russell House, Oxford Road, Bournemouth BH8 8EX | [www.dorsetopera.com](http://www.dorsetopera.com)





## Please assist us to keep in touch with you

Whilst we may not like it, a great amount of our communicating is being done by e-mail nowadays. If we don't have your e-mail address, you might be missing out on important information, last-minute news, and online ticket opportunities.

If you haven't already contacted us to give us your e-mail address, please consider doing so. It will help us to keep in touch with you, and it might save you time and effort. Please send a blank e-mail to our mailing list guru - Susannah Hubert at [Susannah@susannah-hubert.com](mailto:Susannah@susannah-hubert.com)

All your details are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and personal data may only be processed for the specific purposes notified to the data subject or for any other purposes specifically permitted by the Act. This means that personal data must not be collected for one purpose and then used for another.

If it becomes necessary to change the purpose for which the data is processed, the data subject must be informed of the new purpose before any processing occurs.

Dorset Opera will not pass personal data to any external organisation, unless required by law to do so, other than the Friends of Dorset Opera, the providers of box office facilities (currently the Regent Centre, Christchurch) and any other providers of services to Dorset Opera who undertake that any data will be used solely for the purposes specified by Dorset Opera or the Dorset Opera Festival.

“ **Another Tenor Teaser** - <http://bit.ly/1kkXZJM>  
Type this link into your browser and turn up the volume then check the cast lists on our website [www.dorsetopera.com](http://www.dorsetopera.com) ”



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Het Musiektheater | Home of the Dutch National Opera



## Our visit to Amsterdam...

The first Dorset Opera-inspired trip abroad took place just before Easter. Patrons Hugh and Jo Watkins came up with the idea for the visit and invited specialist music tour organisers Travel for the Arts to organise a visit to Amsterdam to see a fully-staged production of the *St. John Passion* by our sister company, the Nederlandse Reisopera. The tour itinerary also included a performance of Richard Strauss' *Arabella* at the Dutch National Opera, along with visits to the newly refurbished Rijksmuseum and the van Gogh Museum.

Although the trip was open to Travel for the Arts' clients from around the world, most of the 20-odd people on the tour were Dorset Opera supporters and their friends. The statistics are fascinating: all but three of the party had attended Dorset Opera performances; one gentleman had never been to an opera in his life, and another came all the way from Singapore to be with us.

It was generally agreed that the productions and musical standards were exceptional. The Musiektheater (specially built

to house opera and ballet some 25 years ago) is a comfortable modern opera house with extensive promenade areas on the banks of the Amstel. Its wide proscenium lent itself perfectly to the sliding wall concept of the *Arabella* production. The stars of the show were most definitely the conductor Marc Albrecht the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, but British bass-baritone James Rutherford excelled as Mandryka.

For the *St. John Passion*, the Nederlandse Reisopera under Nicolas Mansfield welcomed us to the Stadsschouwburg (the exquisite old Amsterdam opera house) with a champagne reception. Bach is not everyone's cup of tea, so the concept of making a production out of an oratorio and setting it in a massive library with the Evangelist as the central character going about the business of writing his Gospel, is both thought-provoking and logical. It certainly made for a most intense evening in the theatre with some superb singing - especially from the double chorus, many of whom have appeared with Dorset Opera.





Moves are already afoot to organise another trip in 2015, and we invite you to let us know what might be of interest. One suggestion is a visit to Leipzig to see Dorset Opera Music Director Jeremy Carnall in action with the Gewandhaus Orchestra at Leipzig Opera, coupled with a trip to the Semperoper in Dresden. Other ideas involve the Scandinavian opera companies. Do let us know your thoughts: e-mail us at [info@dorsetopera.com](mailto:info@dorsetopera.com)



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CHAMPAGNE  
**POL ROGER**

## Champagne by Pol Roger

We are delighted to announce that Champagne house Pol Roger - who supply champagne to Her Majesty the Queen - are supporting the Dorset Opera Festival. Founded in 1849, Pol Roger was the favourite tippie of Sir Winston Churchill who famously said: "In victory, deserve it. In defeat, need it!"

The Pol Roger chateau near Épernay bears a somewhat uncanny resemblance to Bryanston House! All champagne this year will be Pol Roger and you are most welcome to purchase bottles, at prices considerably discounted from your favourite supermarket, from the Marquee Bar.



**PURBECK**  
Award Winning Dorset Ice Cream

## Purbeck Ice Cream

Purbeck Ice Cream has always been served in the Long Interval at the Dorset Opera Festival, but this year, as one of our hospitality partners, we will be serving ice cream from a trendy vending trailer near the marquee.

Look out for those exciting new flavours that Purbeck are always introducing: this summer's limited edition special is lightly salted caramel ice cream - with sea salt and nuggets of salted butterscotch! Yum!

# Performance

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HOME-COOKED HAMPERS

## Picnic Hampers & Afternoon Teas | 10% discount

For the 2014 Festival, Dorset Opera has partnered with bespoke caterers and luxury hamper providers Home-Cooked Hampers, to offer audience-goers the very best in quality picnics. Why not save yourselves the trouble of making a picnic for your visit to Bryanston, simply go online and order direct.

If you do this before 13 June, you will automatically receive a 10% discount on the total cost of your order. Your picnic will be waiting for you in the marquee on the night of your performance.

Home-Cooked Hampers source all their fresh ingredients from local award-winning producers. They are experienced at delivering creative, home-made food to outdoor events and festivals, to shoots and hunts, as well as to clients' homes and holiday cottages for private parties and special occasions.

We recommend their Luxury Wicker Picnic Hamper - which comes with crockery, cutlery and napkins! Just purchase a bottle of Pol Roger champagne with which to wash it down and your Dorset Opera Experience is complete.

For more information and to book your picnic, contact [ashley@homecookedhampers.co.uk](mailto:ashley@homecookedhampers.co.uk) or visit [www.homecookedhampers.co.uk](http://www.homecookedhampers.co.uk)



# DO THE DORSET OPERA FESTIVAL FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Verdi's celebratory spectacular, set in Egypt at the time of the pharaohs, with a cast and orchestra of over 160

## *Aida*

Conductor: Jeremy Carnall | Director: Paul Carr

22, 23, 25, 26(m) July - 19:00 | 14:00

Marking the bicentenary of the premiere of the two-act version of Beethoven's only opera...

## *Fidelio*

Conductor: Phillip Thomas | Director: Laurence Dale

24, 26 July - 19:00

The Coade Theatre Bryanston  
Blandford Forum Dorset DT11 0PX  
Box Office 01202 499199  
Online Booking [dorsetopera.com](http://dorsetopera.com)

Champagne by Pol Roger  
Luxury picnics by Home-Cooked Hampers  
Sumptuous Opera Dinners



## Are you able to assist us?

We are always looking for extra hands to assist us in bringing you Dorset's very own opera festival. We require: sewing ladies (seamstresses), dressers and front-of-house personnel. If you think you could help or know someone who might be suitable, or if you would like to know more about the tasks, please e-mail [info@dorsetopera.com](mailto:info@dorsetopera.com) or call 01258 840000

## Advertise in our programme?

Do you have a business you would like to advertise in this year's souvenir 40th anniversary Festival programme - which is bound to become a collector's item? Do you know someone who might like to support us by taking advertising space? If you do, please contact [info@dorsetopera.com](mailto:info@dorsetopera.com) or call 01258 480000

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## Happy 80th birthday Sir Jonathan...

Jonathan Miller was with us for his 79th birthday last year. He famously hates celebrations but gracefully accepted the tribute when the Dorset Opera Festival orchestra and chorus broke into Happy Birthday, with the whole company joining in! We will be drinking a toast, and thinking of him on 21st July on the occasion of his 80th.



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## Ensure your visit to the Dorset Opera Festival goes smoothly

**Bryanston grounds:** The Bryanston campus is private, but it will be open to the public from 5.00pm on performance days (12.30pm 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 7.00pm. The Saturday matinee starts at 2.00pm. 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. You may pre-order drinks from the bar before the performance for collection during the interval. The bar will be open from 17.30 for evening performances and from 12.30 for the matinee.

If you have ordered a Dorset Opera picnic, sandwich platter 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 boxes are available to order for collection at the performance of your choice. For those who prefer to take pot luck, sandwiches can be purchased 'on the night'. Wines, soft drinks and hot beverages are also available from the marquee bar.

**Afternoon Tea:** At the matinee, our hospitality partner Home-Cooked Hampers 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 direct from Home-Cooked Hampers via our website

**Formal Dining:** For those who prefer a more complete dining experience, The Dorset Opera Festival offers a full 4/5 course promotional opera dinner starting at 5.45pm 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 you or 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. Hopefully, patrons will have informed the Box Office of their need for a wheelchair space when booking tickets. For any other requirements please telephone 01258 840000 well in advance of your visit.

In the unlikely event of rain, picnickers are welcome to take their food into the marquee, or into Bryanston House itself. Rain or shine, one of the staterooms is always available for those preferring to picnic 'indoors'.

**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.

Day and boarding for girls aged 7-13 Pre-prep for girls and boys aged 3-7

**KNIGHTON HOUSE SCHOOL**  
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**CHARITY CONCERT**  
Friday 6th June, 7pm  
Bovington Tank Museum

With Guest Artistes

		
Annemarie Lees Soprano	John Hudson Tenor, English National Opera	Charlotte Hewett Soprano, Dorset Opera

**Tickets: Adults £20, Children £10**  
Ticket price includes admission to museum after 6pm and interval drinks and canapés.

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**Saturday 18 October 2014, 5.55pm**  
LE NOZZE DI FIGARO (MOZART)

**Saturday 1 November 2014, 4.55pm**  
CARMEN (BIZET)

**Saturday 15th November, 5.55pm**  
THE DEATH OF KLINGHOFFER  
(ADAMS)

**Saturday 13th December, 5pm**  
DIE MEISTERSINGER VON  
NURNBERG (WAGNER)

**Saturday 17th January, 5.55pm**  
THE MERRY WIDOW (LEHAR)

**Saturday 31st January, 5.55pm**  
LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN  
(OFFENBACH)

**Saturday 14th February, 5.30pm**  
IOLANTA (TCHAIKOVSKY)/  
DUKE BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE  
(BARTOK)

**Saturday 14th March, 4.55pm**  
LA DONNA DEL LAGO (ROSSINI)

**Saturday 25th April, 5.30pm**  
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