

## Bringing Grand Opera to you

*Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* are arguably the best known double-bill in opera. Because they are so popular with the public, artistic directors often make the mistake of under-casting them: using singers that aren't always suitable for their roles. That's not a mistake we would dare to make here in Dorset.

Most readers will have already booked their tickets. For those who might be wavering, let us entice you and your friends with some details of this year's outstanding international soloists.

One journalist remarked after receiving a recent press release: "This is incredible casting: opera-goers rarely see artists like this outside London, and then only at the Royal Opera House. This rather outdoes Garsington and Grange Park, where top-price tickets cost three times as much as those at Dorset Opera!"

### Who's new, and who's who in *Cav & Pag*?



**Christopher Robertson** (Alfio, *Cav*) Baritone Chris, is a major international talent. He has already sung the title role in *Don Giovanni*, Marcello (*La bohème*), and Sharpless (*Madama Butterfly*) under the baton of James Levine at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He has appeared in the world's foremost opera houses including La Scala, Milan. Opera careers don't get much bigger than this!



**John Hudson** (Turiddu, *Cav*) The famous English lyric tenor is a stalwart of Britain's major opera companies - especially the English National Opera - and is a regular on the international circuit. He has already sung Turiddu in English, but this will be his role debut in Italian.



**Claudio Otelli** (Tonio, *Pag*) The Austrian dramatic baritone began his career at the Vienna State Opera, and is sought-after across the globe for his portrayals of Verdi, Puccini and Wagner 'baddies'! His *Scarpia* (*Tosca*) on the 'floating stage' at the Bregenz Festival is legendary.



**Katharina Peetz** (Lola, *Cav*) comes to us direct from the Zürich Opera where she will have been singing the same role. Mezzo-soprano Katharina is a contracted artist in Zürich and has already appeared on many acclaimed CD and DVD recordings.



**Anando Mukerjee** (Beppe, *Pag*) is India's leading tenor. He made his international singing debut as Rodolfo in *La bohème* for the Belgrade National Opera, and was famously bought in an auction of promises at the Conservative Party Ball, by Grant Bovey and Anthea Turner!



### Who's returning to Dorset Opera in 2009?



**Christine Groeneveld** (Santuzza, *Cav*) Christine starred in the title role of our British stage premiere of Puccini's *Turandot* (with the Berio completion) in 2007. The Dutch dramatic soprano delighted the critics and is set to stun Dorset's audiences with her interpretation of Santuzza.



**Luis Chapa** (Canio, *Pag*) The Mexican tenor touched audiences' hearts with his poignant portrayal of Calaf in our *Turandot* with the Alfano ending. He has performed Canio throughout Europe to great critical acclaim, and brings a vast depth of experience and understanding to this role.



**Marie Vassiliou** (Nedda, *Pag*) Marie sang Leïla in last year's production of *The Pearl Fishers* alongside Leonardo Capalbo. Nedda is one of her favourite feisty roles: watch out for the sparks when she comes face-to-face with Mr Chapa in *Pagliacci*'s final confrontation!



**Franco Pomponi** (Silvio, *Pag*) After appearing in DO's *Hérodiade*, *Opera Now* listed him in its "Who's Hot?" section. *Independent on Sunday* critic George Hall said: "...with his rock-solid voice, concentrated acting talent, and good looks, he seems set to have a fine international career." He was right!



**Annelies Lamm** (Mamma Lucia, *Cav*) The Dutch mezzo is extremely well-known in her home country where she has been singing major roles for 30 years. She famously sang Adalgisa in Bellini's *Norma* in vast arena performances throughout the Netherlands, and the title role in *Carmen* on Dutch TV.

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## Where are they now?

### No. 7 Janet Jacques

The towering Mancunian dramatic soprano Janet Jacques entered the life of Dorset Opera founder, Patrick Shelley, when she came to sing the title role in *Aida* way back in 1977. Over time, it appears that Janet was befriended by most of Sherborne, and became the mainstay of Dorset Opera for years singing *Turandot* (1978), First Lady in *Magic Flute* (1979), Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana* (1980), *The Maid of Orleans* (1981), Abigaille in *Nabucco* (1983), *Mefistofélé* (1991), and *La Périchole* (1995).



Janet Jacques

After training at the Royal Manchester College of Music (now the Royal Northern), Janet was contracted by Sadlers Wells (now the ENO) as a mezzo. She won a scholarship to study in Vienna, and three months later, found herself singing Octavian in Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* in Bonn. With work, the voice became higher, and Janet undertook further study in Vienna to become a soprano. This resulted in her first *Tosca* in St Pölten, and she was then contracted to perform (in German) *Tosca*, Martha in *Tiefland*, and Julie in *Showboat* in St Gallen, where our Music Director, Jeremy Carnall is now based.

She famously sang Verdi's Lady Macbeth and Juno in *La Calisto* at Glyndebourne in the 1970's, and the Verdi *Requiem* at the Carnegie Hall in New York. After adding the title roles in *Salome* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* to her repertoire in Heidelberg, she went on to perform her signature roles of *Turandot* (after making her role debut at Dorset Opera) and Abigaille, throughout Germany, Austria and Italy.

More recently, Janet returned to Dorset Opera to coach young singers and to help them cope with the rigours of our intensive schedule, offering lessons in vocal technique.

Many of Patrick's artists came to Dorset as a result of an introduction by Janet. They include: Michael Milanov, Francesco Petrozzi, Michael Glucksmann, Riccardo Calleo, Andrea Baker and directors Gordon McKechnie and Tom Hawkes. The soprano Karine Babayanjan, and tenor, Zoran Todorovic now have vast international careers. Another Janet Jacques 'find' was a young bass named Roderick Kennedy, who received a call when the singer playing Ramfis in *Aida* dropped out at the eleventh hour.

She even married her fiancé Hubert while she was here in Dorset – well, in Yeovil actually, with Patrick Shelley as Best Man. The reception was hosted by Juliet and Simon Wilkinson at Digby House. Later, Hubert and Janet had a son, George, who is now studying for his PhD back 'home' in Manchester. George crewed for Dorset Opera for several years, and still keeps in touch with his DO friends.

Now retired from singing and from teaching at the local conservatoire, Janet still undertakes some coaching at her home in Augsburg.

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## Cav & Pag Insight Evenings

Don't miss this opportunity to re-acquaint yourself with the music of Mascagni and Leoncavallo before our performances of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* in July.

Simon Rees, the Dramaturg of the Welsh National Opera, will use musical illustrations to explain where *Cav & Pag* fit in to the *verismo* school of opera (which also includes works by the composers Puccini, Cilea, Giordano, Alfano, Catalani, Wolf-Ferrari and many others.)

It could be argued that Bizet's *Carmen*, which precedes *Cav & Pag*, should belong to the *verismo* school, dealing as it does with an everyday story about ordinary people – rather than kings, queens and gods – and set in contemporary times.

The *Insight Evenings* take place in the Lees Lecture Theatre at Bournemouth University on Tuesday 16 June, and at the Digby Memorial Church Hall, Sherborne, on Wednesday 17 June. Both events begin at 6.30pm with wine and canapés. Free for Patrons; £10 per head at the door, for Friends of Dorset Opera and the general public.

Please e-mail: [info@dorsetopera.com](mailto:info@dorsetopera.com) or telephone 01258 840000 for further information or to confirm your attendance.

Dorset Opera

**...nothing short of phenomenal!**

(Opera Magazine)



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## Guest Chorus Master for '09



Nicolas Mansfield

Nicolas Mansfield will be taking over as guest Chorus Master for 2009. He was formerly Chorus Master of the Nationale Reisopera in the Netherlands. He now holds the post of Head of Artistic Administration at the same company, which opened a new €80million theatre sporting Europe's largest orchestra pit, last November. Having witnessed the standard of Dorset's *Turandot* in 2007, Nicolas said he had... "No hesitation in accepting the offer!"

Nicolas Mansfield was born in Reigate, Surrey, where he was a music scholar at Reigate Grammar School. After reading music and biblical studies at Sheffield University he took the postgraduate opera course at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. In 1989 he moved to the Netherlands to sing full time with the Dutch Radio Choir. He has taught singing at the Amsterdam Conservatoire and conducted numerous professional and semi-professional choirs and orchestras.

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(Opera Now)

## Dates for your 2009 diary:

14 June - BSO Endowment Trust. **A Taste of Victoriana:** Larmer Tree - 12 noon. Brass band, champagne and canapé reception followed by luncheon with wine at 1.15pm. Tel: 01202 644704  
 Tickets: Entry and reception only £20 each  
 Entry, reception and luncheon £37.50 each

30, 31 July, 1 August - Dorset Opera. **Cavalleria rusticana & Pagliacci** - 7.30pm (Matinee 2.15pm) Coade Theatre, Bryanston  
 Tickets: £23 - £49.50 each. Box Office Tel: 01202 499199

9 August - BSO Endowment Trust. **Music & Supper at Lulworth Castle** 6.45pm. Guitar Recital by Simon Taylor, Chief Executive of BSO. Champagne and canapé reception, recital and supper with wines  
 Tickets: £50 each. Tel: 01202 644704

15 September **Dorset Opera at The Print Room, Bournemouth** - 7.00pm Champagne reception and 4 course dinner with operatic accompaniment.  
 Tickets: Special Offer to patrons £50 each. Tel: 01202 789669

24 October - BSO Endowment Trust. **Wine Tasting: Canford School** - 6.45pm Champagne reception, fine wine tasting and dinner  
 Tickets: £40 each. Tel: 01202 644704

23 December - BSO Endowment Trust. **Celebration Carol Concert: Lighthouse, Poole** - 7.30pm Details to be announced. Tel: 01202 644704

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## Carmen hits Sherborne...

Our Opera-in-Education team brought their reduced version of *Carmen* to the Sherborne Abbey Festival in early May. Nearly 50 youngsters between the ages of 8 and 16, sporting various forms of Spanish dress – including one huge sombrero that was larger than the boy wearing it – joined established opera singers Olivia Ray (*Carmen*), Jonathan Stoughton (*Don José*), and Dominic Barrand (*Escamillo*), in getting a potted version of the opera to the stage in one short day.

The children spent the morning learning the music of the main choruses with Music Director, Peter Crockford, ably assisted at the piano by Althea Collier. The boys from All Hallows School, Shepton Mallet however, came superbly prepared. The soloists were drafted in to prove that opera singers surprisingly don't use microphones, and after a lunch break and a move to the BSR at Sherborne School, Animateur Tom Williams, added stage directions, actions and narration to the music. The whole culminated in a triumphant late-afternoon performance for delighted parents, grandparents and Dorset Opera aficionados.

Having given the children a brief introduction to opera and a foretaste of what Dorset Opera provides at its annual summer school, it is hoped that they might continue to develop their tastes in music and perhaps one day, join our chorus or even sing with us as soloists.

## NFU Mutual continues to support Dorset Opera

We are delighted that the NFU Mutual Insurance Society Ltd. has agreed to continue its corporate sponsorship of Dorset Opera for another year. The mutual insurer with the local offices supports us in several ways, be it the branding of DO News, the page footers on our website which link directly to theirs, or the provision of their marquee for the use of our audiences. Dorset Opera's bar and food service area can be found therein, and you are most welcome to dine at the tables so generously provided.

NFU Mutual local offices and agents can be found throughout our catchment area and are listed on the back page of this issue. Please mention Dorset Opera when making contact with one of their representatives.

Apart from their support of Dorset Opera, NFU Mutual's recent television and press advertising campaigns have been further enhanced by their sponsorship of the popular ITV series, *Heartbeat*.

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## *Cavalleria rusticana* synopsis

Easter was late that year. Our village, nestling in the lee of the looming Rocca Busambra, was already suffering the sweltering heat of the long Sicilian summer. Grapes withered on the vine. Water became scarce. Lovers took to the fields with promises they did not intend to keep. Even after sunset, there was little respite from that heavy, sweltering heat...

Turiddu returned from the army to find that his girlfriend Lola, unwilling to wait for him, had married his rival Alfio. In a fit of pique, he had a torrid relationship with another village girl, Santuzza. She became pregnant and as a result, was excommunicated. When the irate Alfio discovered that Turiddu was still 'visiting' his wife, events took a nasty turn. In Sicily, in villages like ours, the ancient code of chivalry only allows for one course of action.

Pietro Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana* (loosely translated as *Rustic Chivalry*) launched the verismo school of opera: everyday stories about ordinary people, set in contemporary times. He was just 26 years old when his composition won a music publisher's competition, gaining him overnight fame.

Dorset Opera

...Dorset's orchestra was stupendous!

Opera Now



The Beechwood Lawn at Bryanston

## *Pagliacci* synopsis

By late July/early August, the summer heat had become utterly relentless. The atmosphere – already claustrophobic and full of foreboding – had turned unbearably stifling. That was when Fate brought a troupe of *commedia dell'arte* travelling players to the village. We villagers were excited about attending their late-evening performance, but little did we know that fuelled by jealousy, intrigue, infidelity and misunderstanding, the second tragedy of the year was about to play itself out, literally before our very eyes...

*Pagliacci* (*Players or Clowns*) is the sole work of Ruggiero Leoncavallo to remain in the regular operatic repertoire. He penned the score after hearing *Cavalleria rusticana* in 1890. It became an immediate success after the premiere in 1892. The two works played together for the first time in 1893, and thereafter became seemingly inseparable.

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## Ensure your visit to Dorset Opera goes smoothly

**Bryanston grounds:** The Bryanston campus is private, but it will be open to the public from 5.30pm on performance days (1.00pm for the Saturday matinee.) You and your guests are most welcome to wander round the glorious grounds.

**Running Times:** *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Pagliacci* will each be approximately 70 minutes long.

**Interval:** The picnic/dinner interval will last approximately 40-45 minutes.

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**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.

**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 Beechwood Lawn, and inside the NFU Mutual 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, we offer a full afternoon tea with a selection of finger sandwiches, scones with clotted cream and preserves, and cakes, with your choice of tea or coffee. This has proved extremely popular, but you will need to pre-order.

**Four-course fine dining:** For those who prefer a more complete, fine dining experience, Dorset Opera offers a full 4-course promotional opera dinner in one of the grand staterooms of Bryanston House, on the evenings of 31 July and 1 August only. Take two courses before the opera, and return to your tables for the rest of the meal during the Long Interval. Wines included. Further information, menus and food order forms can be found on the Box Office page of our website. Alternatively, please call Dorset Opera on 01258 840000.

**Car Parking:** Please drive with care on the Bryanston campus and park as indicated by the attendants. 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 attendants 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 in advance of your visit.

**In the event of rain:** 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.

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