

An aerial photograph of Bryanston House, a large, historic red-brick building with multiple wings and a central tower. The house is surrounded by lush green lawns, numerous trees, and several smaller buildings. In the background, there are rolling green hills under a blue sky with light clouds.

20
THE DORSET OPERA
FESTIVAL
TWENTIETH YEAR AT BRYANSTON
2005 - 2025
President: Sir Mark Elder CH CBE

With the generous support of



LAIDLAW
OPERA
TRUST

Dorset Opera News | Spring 2025 | Issue 39
Celebrating Twenty Years at Bryanston



We are delighted to continue our support of this wonderful festival of Opera. We look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones.

If you are interested in learning more about our specialist financial planning services, please contact our local experts.

mail@bottrielladams.co.uk

bottrielladams.co.uk | trinitybridge.com

The value of investments can fall as well as rise and you could get back less than you invested.





Twenty years at Bryanston...

At this moment, twenty years ago, we were readying ourselves to re-launch Dorset Opera after the shock of the sudden death of our founder, Patrick Shelley. We took a year out in order to re-group and move the company from Sherborne (where it had somewhat outstayed its welcome) to big, beautiful spacious, Bryanston!

And here we are, 20 years on, celebrating that move – a move for which many Shirburnians have never really forgiven us and yet they will be the first to admit that Bryanston offers a spectacularly better venue and glorious grounds in which one can actually sit on a balmy summer's evening and enjoy a picnic and a glass of champagne.

In this, our second consecutive year of celebration, we recall that re-launch production in 2005. *Nabucco*, with the great Romanian baritone, Michele Kalmandi in the title role, Dominic Wheeler in the pit, directed by William Relton with James Henderson as chorus master and Cordelia Chisholm's sparse but very effective sets.



Welcoming back to Bryanston...

Established returnees this year are Eddie Wade as Monterone, Tim Bagley as Marullo, Arthur Bruce as Count Ceprano, Patricia Casement as the Nursing Sister, Patrizia Dina as Sister Dolcina and Amber Reeves as Countess Ceprano and Sister Osmina.

We also welcome back our strong ensemble of home-grown talent and emerged artists... Lucy Breakwell (First Alms Sister), Jay Broadhurst (Matteo Borsa), Daisy Lapworth (Giovanna), and Sam Weakley (The Court Usher)... Several other roles will be available for chorus audition, upon arrival in Dorset.



The Story Behind Our Opera Choices for 2025

Presenting *Rigoletto* as a standalone production alongside a double bill of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Suor Angelica* creates a powerful and well-balanced programme of Italian opera. Though not performed on the same evening, the three works form a thematically and emotionally coherent group, offering audiences a varied yet connected operatic experience.

Rigoletto is one of Verdi's most gripping and tightly constructed dramas. It explores power, revenge, and the tragic consequences of love and manipulation, all set to some of the most iconic music in the operatic repertoire. Its psychological depth and dramatic intensity make it ideally suited to Dorset Operas raison d'être.

The double bill of *Cavalleria rusticana* and *Suor Angelica* offers a contrasting but complementary experience. *Cavalleria* delivers raw, passionate emotion and rural realism, while *Suor Angelica* turns inward, focusing on spiritual suffering and redemption. Together, they form a compelling emotional arc – from earthly violence to personal transcendence – within the concise format of two one-act operas.

Although each work is distinct in period and style – spanning Verdi's Romantic drama, Mascagni's verismo intensity, and Puccini's lyrical introspection – they are united by a shared emphasis on profound human emotion, moral consequence, and expressive vocal writing. Presenting them in this way allows each opera to shine individually, while also offering audiences a broader perspective on the richness and diversity of Italian opera as a whole.

This structure is well suited to our short production period: three operas that are distinct yet thematically linked, efficiently staged, and deeply affecting in performance.



20 | **Rigoletto** Giuseppe Verdi

A cornerstone of the operatic canon, *Rigoletto* grips audiences with its haunting blend of passion, power, and tragedy. Verdi's masterful score brings to life the tortured soul of the 'jester' Rigoletto, whose love for his daughter Gilda is both his salvation and his undoing. From the glittering cruelty of the Duke's 'La donna è mobile' to the heartbreaking final moments, this opera is a testament to Verdi's genius for developing character and melody.

Starring: South Korean superstar baritone, Hansung Yoo is Rigoletto. Letitia Vitelaru returns to bring her crystalline beauty and emotional nuance to the role of Gilda, while Tchaikovsky competition winner, Jihoon Son infuses the Duke of Mantua with seductive charm and vocal brilliance.

20 | **Opera Dinners** Reminder...

Instead of bothering to prepare your own picnic and working out where to eat it if the weather is inclement, why not avail yourselves of the Opera Dinner? Take advantage of our formal four-course dinners which will be served in the Cowley Room of Bryanston House at the *Cavalleria rusticana* & *Suor Angelica* performances on Thursday 24, and *Rigoletto* performance on Saturday 26 July. Two courses are served before the opera, the dessert and cheese courses (along with coffee and petits fours) during the interval. Wines and bottled water are included in the price.

Check out the menus, prices, and please book at dorsetopera.com. Bookings close on 18 July. Vegan, gluten-free and vegetarian options are available. Please inform your guests that they should be seated by 17:45.



20 | **Cavalleria rusticana** Pietro Mascagni

A landmark in the verismo movement, *Cavalleria rusticana* delivers raw, unfiltered emotion in a single act packed with passion, betrayal, and honour. Set in a Sicilian village on Easter Sunday morning, this tale of love and revenge unfolds with searing intensity, anchored by Mascagni's iconic Intermezzo—one of the most beloved orchestral pieces in all opera.

Starring: Tenor Leonardo Capalbo brings vocal fire and emotional complexity to Turiddu, alongside mezzo-soprano Julia Mintzer as the tormented Santuzza. Baritone Gyula Nagy commands the stage as the proud and vengeful Alfio.

20 | **The Friends of** Dorset Opera

It's never too late to join our Friends organisation. Unlock the path to better ticket availability with priority booking and receive first-hand news on our sought-after Bluffers' lunches. The latest June lunch has a waiting list of 23 – making it essential that supporters should book as soon as they receive details of upcoming lectures.

Join the Friends for just £60 for single membership or £80 for joint-membership – which would cover a spouse, partner, child or grandchild. The Friends are proud to contribute a substantial amount towards the overall artistic costs of the Festival each year. For our 50th anniversary in 2024, they provided a one-off £75,000 towards the cost of commissioning *Under the Greenwood Tree* along with stellar casts and superb sets and costumes.

**Festival
Corporate
Sponsors...**

 **TrinityBridge**



LANGHAM
WINE ESTATE

Duke's
AUCTIONEERS SINCE 1823

John Whibley
"Holidays with Music"

hklaw
savills



Suor Angelica Giacomo Puccini

This exquisite one-act opera from Puccini's *Il trittico* cycle is a gem of emotional intensity and spiritual redemption. Set within the cloistered walls of a convent, *Suor Angelica* tells the story of a young noblewoman whose secret sorrow is revealed through soaring, heart-rending music. Puccini's lush orchestration and deeply humane storytelling culminate in an ending that is both devastating and transcendent.

Starring: Soprano Eri Nakamura takes on the title role with breathtaking vulnerability and vocal warmth, while mezzo-soprano Maria Schellenberg delivers a chilling, poised performance as the implacable, Zia Principessa.



LAIDLAW
OPERA
TRUST

**Laidlaw
Opera Trust**

Laidlaw Opera Trust champions live music as a uniquely thrilling art form, accessible to all. We invest in opera companies and houses who believe that opera should be part of everyone's cultural capital. Through strategic support and grants, we aim to expand Opera's reach and self-sufficiency.

By investing in the future of this cherished art form, we enrich cultural landscapes and nurture the next generation of opera enthusiasts and artists. The trust has the following aims:

- Bring opera to new audiences, making it accessible, inclusive and future-proof
- Support new and outstanding productions
- Sustain and retain British singers in the industry
- Help opera to become more self-sufficient - encouraging innovation and collaboration

For further information please see the website:
<https://www.laidlawopera.org/#mission>

20 THE DORSET OPERA FESTIVAL

TWENTIETH YEAR AT BRYANSTON

2005 - 2025

President: Sir Mark Elder CH CBE

The home of Country House opera in South West England featuring renowned soloists, a full orchestra and a large chorus of emerging young artists

Marquee Bar | Picnics | Formal Dining

Giuseppe Verdi

RIGOLETTO

22, 25, 26 July at 19:00 | 24 July at 14:00

Double Bill

Pietro Mascagni

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Giacomo Puccini

SUOR ANGELICA

23, 24 July at 19:00 | 26 July at 14:00



The social highlight of Dorset's summer!

Coade Theatre, Bryanston, Blandford Forum
Box Office: dorsetopera.com | 07570 366 186



Cavalleria rusticana Leonardo Capalbo



Returning: Italian–American tenor Leonardo Capalbo is celebrated for his rich lyric voice and compelling stage presence. He has performed Ismaele (*Nabucco*) and the title role in *The Tales of Hoffmann* at the The Royal Opera House and leading roles in major opera houses worldwide, including Teatro Real Madrid, Berlin State Opera and the Glyndebourne Festival. Capalbo's repertoire spans works by Verdi, Bizet, Massenet, Mascagni and Puccini, earning him acclaim for his versatility and dramatic intensity.



Rigoletto Letitia Vitelaru



Returning: Romanian soprano Letitia Vitelaru returns to the Coade stage after her breathtaking performances in the title role of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 2019 and Ciòciò–San in a performance of *Madama Butterfly* last year. She honed her craft at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi in Milan and the Accademia della Scala, studying under renowned mentors including the great Mirella Freni. Vitelaru is sought after in such roles as Mimì in *La bohème* and Violetta in *La traviata*.



Rigoletto Julian Close



Returning: Julian Close began his career studying Applied Physics before transitioning to opera at the Royal Northern College of Music. He has since become one of the UK's most acclaimed basses, performing with esteemed companies such as The Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera. Critics have praised his deep, resonant voice and commanding stage presence. He has already sung the role of Sparafucile at the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

CH Church House
Investment
Management

A safe haven
in sometimes
tempestuous seas

Sensible planning. Smart
investing. Superior service.

Call 01935 382620
or click
www.ch-investments.co.uk



Suor Angelica Eri Nakamura



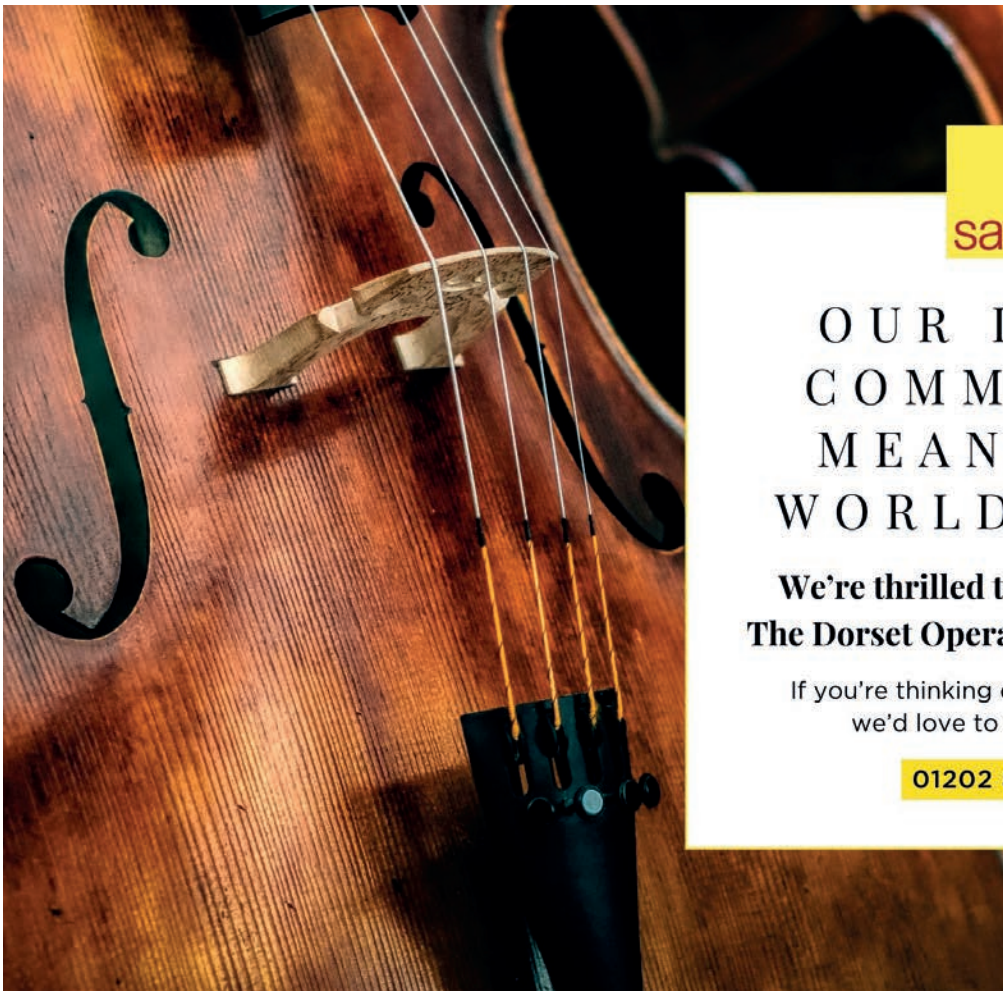
Returning: Japanese soprano Eri Nakamura gained international recognition when she stepped in for Anna Netrebko as Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at the Royal Opera House. A former Jette Parker Young Artist, she has since performed leading roles across Europe, Asia, and the Americas. She is noted for her assured singing and artistic intensity.



Cavalleria rusticana Heather Lowe



Returning: British mezzo-soprano Heather Lowe studied at the RNCM and the National Opera Studio. For Dorset Opera Festival she was a phenomenal Isolier in our hilarious production of *Le Comte Ory* and Dorabella in our 2021 *Così fan tutte*. She has performed with most of the UK's opera companies, including Opera Holland Park, where she portrayed Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and at Grange Festival, where she embodied the title role in *La cenerentola*.



savills

OUR LOCAL
COMMUNITY
MEANS THE
WORLD TO US

**We're thrilled to be sponsoring
The Dorset Opera Festival this year.**

If you're thinking of buying or selling,
we'd love to hear from you

01202 856 800



Ensure your visit to the Festival goes smoothly

Bryanston: For SatNav purposes, the postcode is DT11 0PS or What3words is *tall.ever.glimmer*. 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, on matinées at 14:00. Performances will be approximately 185 minutes long. This includes the dinner interval of 45-50 minutes. After Thursday 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 a range of award-winning sparkling wines from Dorset's Langham Wine Estate, Pimm's, 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: Most Dorset Opera-goers arrive early to enjoy a picnic before the performance, continuing 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, *The Salt Pig* 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. Sparkling wines, 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 new hospitality partner *The Salt Pig*, 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 on Thursday and Saturday evening performances. Take two courses before the opera and return to your tables for the rest of the meal during the 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.

Dorset Opera News | Spring 2025 | Issue 39

Dorset Opera is a Registered Charity No: 1105318 and
a Company Limited by Guarantee No: 5170704

For advertising opportunities in DO News and in opera programmes,
+44 (0)1258 840000 | js@dorsetopera.com | dorsetopera.com

Designed by Dorset Digital Print Ltd | 01202 620 215