

Key information for participants in Dorset Opera Festival

This document is always a work in progress. You will always find the latest version on the website

[Participants' Zone](#) (password Tosca) We welcome edits or additions to info@dorsetopera.com

Key dates 2026

Soloists arrive 8th July

Chorus arrive 9th July

Academy Orchestra arrive 15th and 16th July

Full Orchestra arrive 17th July

Dress rehearsals 19th and 20th July

Performances 21-25 July

Depart Sunday 26th July 9-9:30am

Access by car

SatNav use DT11 OPS, what3words///tall.ever.glimmers. These both take you to Bryanston's main gate from where there is a mile or so drive up to the main house what3words///organs.avid.simulator. The main gate is locked at 23.00 but there are other routes on and off site. Make sure you know them before leaving campus in the evening.

Bus from/to Salisbury station

9th July We send a minibus to meet arrivals at Salisbury Station at 11:43 (meeting the train that departs Waterloo at 10:20). You have a place on the minibus as long as you've let us know.

Sunday 26th July the bus leaves the main house at 9am to get to Salisbury in time for the 10:27am train to London Waterloo. We'll be checking your departure arrangements with you soon. If you are travelling with especially large luggage or a large musical instrument, please let us know.

Parking

Parking is free but parked cars on site must display a permit. Register your car before you arrive: <https://www.dorsetopera.com/car/> (password Tosca) and collect your permit from the office. We must not park at the main house so, after dropping luggage off, please move your car to the lower car park, beside the theatre: what3words///reward.inflation.recital. Cars dropping off do not need a permit.

The Festival Office

The office is in a room called Cerne Abbas - into the main house, turn left on the main corridor, last room on the left. The office is usually open 8.30am to 10.00pm with occasional exceptions. You will come here for post received for you, lost property, T-shirt order collection, parking permits, arranging to see a doctor or physio.

Help

Festival Office 8:30am - 10pm email office@dorsetopera.com

First Aid: Daisy Lapworth 07454 363432

Chorus Manager: Frannie Hewitt 07932 044480 or drop a message onto the Chorus WhatsApp group.

House Wardens: James Formoy 07791 370091, Female Jaz Randall 07926 956146

As a last resort, call the Duty Company Manager on 07570 366075.

If there is a fire or a serious accident use your initiative and call 999!

Receiving post

Post should come to **you c/o Dorset Opera Festival, Bryanston School, Blandford Forum, DT11 0PX**

Daily routine

Breakfast 8-9

Rehearsal 10-1

Lunch 1-2

Rehearsal 2.30-5.30

Supper 6 (5.30 on dress rehearsal and performance days)

Rehearsal 7-10

The Daily Canary

Each evening we send round the following day's schedule and other news by both email and WhatsApp broadcast. To receive the WhatsApp broadcast please save 07789 071887 onto your phone and text a request (don't forget to say who you are). We aim to get the Canary out as early as we can each evening but occasionally we are waiting on vital information from the production team.

Chorus routine

The first 4 days are all note learning. Then we start production rehearsals. Then rehearsals with the orchestra who arrive 18th, then dress rehearsals. No rehearsals take place during performance week apart from a warm up. Everyone must attend all rehearsals unless they have previously-agreed permission from the Artistic Director and production director to miss one, or part of one.

Filming on your phone

British Law expressly protects a performer's rights, therefore recording and posting of any rehearsal (including orchestral) or performance is strictly forbidden. Dorset Opera records the dress rehearsals for archive purposes only.

Accommodation

You will be allocated a room on arrival and given a bracelet ID which will grant access to the space you will use at Bryanston. Random swapping is not allowed for safety reasons. There is a male house (Shaftesbury) and a female house (Salisbury). Neither are to be accessed by persons of the opposite gender. There is one mixed gender corridor (Beethoven) and a mixed house (Connaught). You should expect to feel safe on campus and as such access to the boarding areas is restricted according to the specific bracelet ID. If anything happens which makes you uncomfortable, please discuss this with a member of the office, a house warden or whoever you feel you can confide in.

Bar

The bar in the basement corridor is where a lot of us like to congregate for a quick drink after rehearsals.

Coffee shop

Also in the basement corridor is the Costa-style coffee shop.

Cooking in your room

Cooking - or a naked flame for any other reason - in your room is strictly forbidden and the breaking of this rule would be immediate dismissal from the course.

Costume Fittings

A costume fittings schedule (for days 1 and 2) will be sent round in *The Daily Canary*. Every chorus member will be given a time slot and absolutely must attend their fitting. If unavailable through sickness or agreed absence, you must let the Costume department know so that rearrangements can be made. **You are allowed to sneak out of rehearsal for this.**

Illness

Colds, coughs etc, can seriously impact the course. If you have heavy cold symptoms before the start of the course DO NOT travel. Instead, contact the chorus manager to discuss your options. If symptoms develop once you are at Bryanston, you must keep well away from others and do not attend rehearsals until you are well. If you have a very light cold, you must wear a mask out of consideration for others. We will have masks available in the festival office.

Lost property

Lost property should be handed in at the Festival Office.

Masterclasses

Some of the principals offer masterclasses, which you can sign up for in the second week. Everyone should be allocated one, but it's a good idea to sign up for several in case your first choice is over-subscribed. Bring with you **two copies** of your own sheet music. Masterclasses take place during Performance Week and are open for everyone to watch.

Merchandise

To buy a 2026 DOF polo, rugby or T-shirt, order via [download the order form](#) in the Participants' Zone on the website (password Tosca)

Minor roles

Some minor roles may be given to member of the chorus with early auditions.

Mock auditions

You'll sign up for these in the second week. They take place in the Elder Concert Hall on the final Friday or Saturday. These sessions are primarily for students wanting audition practice. You will be auditioned by Artistic Director Rod, conductor Jeremy and chorus master Stephen, who may offer feedback. Bring **three copies** of the sheet music for your chosen piece. The piece you sing could be the same as for the masterclass if you like. Auditions are held in private — and who knows, they could even put you on the radar as a future DOF soloist!

Noise at night

The course is hard work. Please be super respectful of others' need to get good sleep and don't take offence if you are asked to be quieter.

Overnight absences

For overnight absence you must obtain permission from the Artistic Director and it is imperative you let the office know. This is crucial information for the house wardens and fire brigade in case of a fire.

Production photography and private headshots

Photographer Julian Guidera will be onsite photographing the dress rehearsals. As soon as possible a Dropbox link will be shared with you from which you'll have access to production photos for free use. Julian will be offering private sessions for professional headshots on request whilst he's on site - we'll be sending round more information.

Curry Party and After Party!

We have a curry fancy dress party (US costume party) on Friday 17th. The fancy dress theme letter for 2026 is letter D! Start dreaming up your most imaginative costumes now (for Amazon deliveries to Bryanston, see **Receiving post** above).

An after-party will be held on 25th July after the evening show. Food and drink provided at both.

Smoking and vaping

Bryanston is a strictly no smoking/no-vaping campus with only one designated smoking area. Details at the meet and greet. Bryanston takes smoking in the rooms very seriously and can ask you to leave the course if this is contravened - and this has happened in the past - Bryanston's cleaners have noses like bloodhounds.

Sports facilities

We have use of Bryanston's swimming pool annoyingly (sorry, we are in Bryanston's hands) early in the morning and tennis courts and gym if you have the energy to do any of these things. You'll need to bring your own kit.

Tesco

There is a Tesco superstore quite close to Bryanston main gates. It's a pleasant, if rather long, walk. If it's urgent, check with the office to see if anyone can run you down there.

Valuables

You are asked not to bring expensive jewellery and other valuables. Bryanston is a boarding school and the rooms are not lockable.

Watches, nail varnish, spectacles

Make sure you are not on stage in anachronistic accessories - in other words no watches, glasses, nail varnish etc etc if the opera is set in 1622!