



LONGBOROUGH
— FESTIVAL OPERA —

Longborough Festival Opera announces 2025 programme

Debussy: *Pelléas et Mélisande*
Dorman: *Wahnfried: The Birth of the Wagner Cult* *UK premiere
Rossini: *Il barbiere di Siviglia*
Purcell: *Dido and Aeneas*

Led by Artistic Director **Polly Graham** and Executive Director **Emily Gottlieb**, Longborough Festival Opera unveils its 2025 season under the continued guidance of esteemed Music Director **Anthony Negus**.

The festival's audacity reaches new heights as it presents two remarkable operas that owe their existence to Wagner's impact on music: Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*, and the UK premiere of Avner Dorman's *Wahnfried: The Birth of the Wagner Cult*.

Pelléas et Mélisande

Music Director **Anthony Negus** comments: "*I am delighted that, beyond the Ring, Longborough is entrusting me with other ambitious and distinguished works which allow me to continue to grow as an artist, and I am proud to be Music Director of this extraordinary company whose bold spirits and warm heart allows it to achieve great things.*

I've always felt a special feeling towards Pelléas - Debussy's post-Wagnerian masterpiece, whose drama is powerful yet understated, and whose orchestral interludes are imbued with a Parsifal like atmosphere as well as harmonies that are under the spell of Tristan und Isolde. We have waited a long time to tackle it at Longborough, and I believe the time is now ripe for us to present it and to experience its mystery and subtle beauty in a new staging. Our theatre will serve this piece particularly well."

Wahnfried: The Birth of the Wagner Cult

Longborough welcomes back **Justin Brown** ("magnificently done - and comes straight from the heart" Jessica Duchon, 5* *The I paper*) to conduct the UK premiere of Avner Dorman's *Wahnfried: The Birth of the Wagner Cult* ("wide-ranging, appealing, breathtakingly virtuosic" - *Washington Post*). Dorman delves into the story of the Wagner family and the politicisation of Wagner's music in 20th-century Germany. *Wahnfried* was first performed in Germany in 2017 and was nominated for Best New Opera at the 2018 International Opera Awards. Longborough's production will feature a cast of leading British singers including **Susan Bullock CBE**, and **Mark Le Brocq**, fresh from his roles as Loge and Siegmund in Longborough's *Ring* and Aschenbach in WNO's *Death in Venice*.

Music Director **Anthony Negus** comments: “Attending the world premiere in 2017 was a profoundly moving experience. I am thrilled to bring this piece to Longborough. Presenting this opera about the Wagner family here feels especially fitting, as Longborough is often regarded as the British Bayreuth.”

Il barbiere di Siviglia

Elsewhere in the 2025 season, Longborough presents a new production of Gioachino Rossini’s beloved comic opera, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Known for its effervescent melodies and comedic brilliance, this production promises to delight audiences of all ages.

Dido and Aeneas

Closing the 2025 season will be a new production of Purcell’s masterpiece *Dido and Aeneas*. For the Longborough Emerging Artists and Youth Chorus, the opportunity to take part in this project will be inspirational, and for audiences, this promises to be a barnstorming end to a thrilling season.

Beyond 2025

Further Wagnerian performances are planned for 2026 and 2027.

In 2026, Longborough presents a revival of the much-lauded production of *Tristan & Isolde* from 2015 and 2017, conceived and directed by **Carmen Jakobi** and conducted by **Anthony Negus** (“One of the most exalting operatic experiences I have had” - Michael Tanner, *The Spectator*).

Then in 2027, having conquered the *Ring* twice in just over a decade, Longborough takes on a new flagship project, and one of the most challenging operas in the repertoire: a new production of Wagner’s life-affirming comedy *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Conducted by Music Director **Anthony Negus**, and directed by Longborough’s Artistic Director, **Polly Graham**, this production allows the company to build on their tradition of nurturing British Wagnerians, and developing talent. A large professional cast and chorus will work alongside Longborough’s now established Youth and Community Choruses. *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*’s themes of learning, craftsmanship, community music-making, summer festivities and philosophy of art will allow an expanded festival programme around this wellspring of an opera.

For more information and to stay updated on ticket release dates, visit <https://lfo.org.uk/>

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About Longborough Festival Opera

Martin and Lizzie Graham started promoting opera in the grounds of their home in 1991 as Banks Fee Opera. Longborough Festival Opera has since grown into an established opera company, situated in the heart of the Cotswolds, with an annual season taking place in a purpose-built opera house seating 500. Martin and Lizzie's daughter, the acclaimed opera director Polly Graham, was appointed as Artistic Director in 2018; and Emily Gottlieb joined as Executive Director in April 2024, following nine years as Chief Executive of the National Opera Studio, the UK's foremost opera training organisation.

Longborough's intimate auditorium enables the audience to experience the drama and emotion on the stage on an almost personal level, firmly securing the summer season into the diaries of a loyal and ever-increasing audience.

Longborough Festival Opera is a charity, relying on ticket sales and the generosity of its members and audience.