



Longborough Festival Opera Announces 2020 Season

Longborough Festival Opera has revealed the programme for its 2020 season, which includes the next instalment in its new *Ring* cycle, Wagner's *Die Walküre*. Also on the programme is Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*, Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses* and Leoš Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*.

Wagner *Die Walküre*

Longborough's esteemed Wagnerian and Music Director **Anthony Negus** will conduct *Die Walküre*, joining forces once again with director **Amy Lane** (Royal Opera House). The cast includes **Mark Le Brocq** as Siegmund, **Sarah Marie Kramer** as Sieglinde, **Paul Carey Jones** as Wotan and **Lee Bisset** in her role debut as Brünnhilde, following an acclaimed performance as Isolde at Longborough in 2017.

Lee Bisset comments: "I am thrilled to sing my first Ring Cycle as Brünnhilde, the pinnacle of Wagner heroines, for the company in which I sang my first Wagner role. The 2013 Ring Cycle at Longborough was very special, but as Longborough seems to go from strength to strength, knowing the team involved, and seeing what is slowly unfolding, I hope that this new Cycle will be something extraordinary."

Monteverdi *The Return of Ulysses*

The next season also sees Longborough's Artistic Director **Polly Graham** make her directing debut at the festival.

Polly Graham comments: "Alongside the momentous second instalment of our Ring cycle, we share three other major works - all different in style. I'm delighted to be collaborating with conductor **Robert**

Howarth on *The Return of Ulysses* - Monteverdi's beautiful, compassionate drama of homecoming. This will be performed on period instruments, with **Tom Randle** in the title role."

Donizetti *The Elixir of Love*

Also on the 2020 programme is Donizetti's romantic comic masterpiece, *The Elixir of Love*. Under the baton of **Alice Farnham**, this will be an exuberant comic show for all the family.

Janáček *The Cunning Little Vixen*

Finally, the season ends with a performance of Janáček's beautiful take on the cycle of life, *The Cunning Little Vixen*. This will be performed by talented artists at the start of their careers, as part of Longborough's annual Emerging Artist programme.

Polly Graham comments: "This is one of the greatest operas ever written, Wagnerian in its scope. It shifts from the comic world of everyday village life into the mystical cycle of the natural world - perfect for Longborough. Our production comes complete with a Youth Chorus of local children, conducted by **Justin Brown**. We hope to see you there."

Tickets for the festival will go on public sale at 10am on Monday 2 March 2020. Further information can be found at <https://lfo.org.uk/>.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Longborough Festival Opera

Martin and Lizzie Graham started promoting opera in the grounds of their home in 1991 as Banks Fee Opera. They are still very much involved in the day-to-day running of the Festival, which now takes place in a purpose-built Opera House. Martin and Lizzie's daughter, the acclaimed opera director **Polly Graham**, was appointed as Artistic Director in 2018.

Longborough Festival Opera is now an established opera company, situated in the heart of the Cotswolds. Its intimate auditorium seats 500 people, enabling the audience to experience the drama and emotion on the stage on an almost personal level. This has firmly secured Longborough's summer season into the diaries of a loyal and ever-increasing audience.

Longborough Festival Opera is a privately funded opera company; with no public subsidy, the organisation relies on ticket sales and the generosity of its members and audience.

Throughout Longborough's history, Martin and Lizzie have achieved what some might have said to be impossible – in 2013 they presented a full-length production of Wagner's Ring Cycle with minimal budgets but to great critical acclaim. The success of the Ring Cycle was a landmark for Longborough Festival Opera: it created a new momentum, and firmly established the festival as a destination for Wagnerians in the UK and abroad.