



## Booking now open for Longborough Festival Opera 2020

Booking is now open for Longborough Festival Opera's 2020 season, which includes the next installment in its new Ring cycle: Wagner *Die Walküre*.

2020 also sees Artistic Director **Polly Graham** make her directorial debut at Longborough; the launch of a new Youth Chorus; and the festival's first collaboration with the **Academy of Ancient Music (AAM)** in a brand new production of Monteverdi *The Return of Ulysses*.

### 2020 Programme

#### Wagner *Die Walküre*

4 – 13 June 2020

Longborough's esteemed Wagnerian and Music Director **Anthony Negus** will conduct *Die Walküre*, joining forces once again with director **Amy Lane**. 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."

Full cast: <https://lfo.org.uk/opera/die-walkure>

Donizetti *The Elixir of Love*

25 June – 4 July 2020

Donizetti's comic masterpiece, *The Elixir of Love*, will be performed in English under the baton of **Alice Farnham**, set in the rugged landscape of the Wild West. Longborough welcomes master of physical comedy and director of Giffords Circus **Cal McCrystal** to direct this production, following his critically acclaimed *Iolanthe* for English National Opera and Haydn's *Il mondo della luna* for English Touring Opera.

The cast includes **Jung Soo Yun** as the love-struck Nemorino following his Longborough debut as Percy in *Anna Bolena* last year, Welsh bass baritone **Emyr Wyn Jones** as Dulcamara, soprano **Robyn Allegra Parton** making her role debut as Adina, British baritone **Marcus Farnsworth** as Belcore and soprano **Lizzie Holmes** as Gianetta.

Full cast: <https://lfo.org.uk/opera/the-elixir-of-love>

Monteverdi *The Return of Ulysses*

14 – 21 July 2020

Longborough's Artistic Director **Polly Graham** makes her directorial debut at the festival with Monteverdi *The Return of Ulysses*, with conductor **Robert Howarth** and **Tom Randle** in the title role. The production also marks Longborough's first collaboration with the **Academy of Ancient Music**.

AAM Chief Executive **Alexander Van Ingen** comments: "We are delighted to be working with Longborough Festival Opera for Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses* in July 2020. Having performed this work to critical acclaim with Robert Howarth in 2017, we're very excited to be re-united for a new production directed by Polly Graham in the beautiful surroundings of Longborough. I'm sure that Robert's first-class musicianship combined with the extraordinary expertise of AAM's players and Polly's bold and powerful direction will make this period-instrument opera one to remember."

Full cast: <https://lfo.org.uk/opera/the-return-of-ulysses>

Janáček *The Cunning Little Vixen*

30 July – 4 August 2020

The season finishes with Janáček's bold operatic masterpiece *The Cunning Little Vixen*, which recounts the life and death of a clever, freedom-fighting she-fox with a colourful cast of animal and human characters and a sublime, folk-inspired musical score.

This will be performed by talented artists at the start of their careers, as part of Longborough's annual Emerging Artist programme. The production is led by internationally celebrated director **Olivia Fuchs** and Music Director of Karlsruhe State Opera **Justin Brown**.

**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."

Full cast: <https://lfo.org.uk/opera/the-cunning-little-vixen>

### **Polly Graham's Longborough Directorial Debut**

2020 sees **Polly Graham** make her directorial debut at Longborough Festival Opera, with Monteverdi *The Return of Ulysses*.

**Polly Graham** comments: "It's really exciting for me to tackle this amazing, challenging piece at Longborough as my first show for the festival, and to be collaborating with the **Academy of Ancient Music** led by **Rob Howarth**. This ancient story of Ulysses' homecoming provokes many questions – Is home a physical place or a state of mind? Is it possible to return to the same place you left?"

My love of music and theatre was nurtured in the early days of this great festival, when the boundaries between home and theatre overlapped significantly. Directing this piece feels like my own kind of return – full of excitement and trepidation. And of course, tackling the idiosyncrasies of the theatre!"

### **New Youth Chorus**

In 2019 Longborough launched a new Youth Chorus to inspire local 7-18-year-olds with learning and participation opportunities.

The new Youth Chorus offers professional coaching, performance opportunities in the community, and the chance to take part in Longborough's productions. This season marks the Youth Chorus's first production as part of the main festival.

Children from the Youth Chorus will perform alongside the Emerging Artists in Janáček's homage to the cycle of life, *The Cunning Little Vixen*. Local children will feature in the performance as fox cubs, frogs, grasshoppers and a chorus of forest animals.

Find out more: <https://lfo.org.uk/young-people/youth-chorus>

### **How to Buy Tickets**

Tickets for the festival are available at <https://lfo.org.uk/>

### **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; the organisation relies on ticket sales and the generosity of its members and audience.



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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.