



Longborough Festival Opera Announces 2021 Season

Longborough Festival Opera has revealed the programme for its 2021 season (4 June – 3 August).

Artistic Director **Polly Graham** comments: “We’re delighted to be announcing these plans for 2021 and look forward to sharing these now much anticipated productions with our wonderful audiences, whose loyalty and generosity has supported us through the challenge of 2020. We cannot wait to bring the whole Longborough Festival Opera company together again.”

Next year, Longborough will stage three of the operas originally intended for 2020: including Monteverdi’s *The Return of Ulysses*, Leoš Janáček’s *The Cunning Little Vixen* and the next production in the festival’s *Ring* cycle: Wagner’s *Die Walküre*. Alongside these will be *Così fan tutte*, a new production for 2021.

For the remainder of the *Ring* cycle, Longborough will perform *Götterdämmerung* in 2022, and celebrate the theatre’s 25th anniversary in 2023 with the full cycle of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* as originally intended. 2023 will contain a new production of *Siegfried*.

Wagner *Die Walküre*

Longborough’s esteemed Wagnerian and Music Director **Anthony Negus** will conduct *Die Walküre*, joining forces once again with director **Amy Lane**. The cast includes **Lee Bisset** in her much-anticipated role debut as Brunnhilde, following an acclaimed performance as Isolde at Longborough in 2017.

Lee Bisset comments: “I am thrilled to sing my first Ring Cycle as Brunnhilde, 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.”

Mozart *Così fan tutte*

Conductor **Lesley Anne Sammons** and director **Sam Brown** bring to life Mozart's much-loved *Così fan tutte*. Lesley Anne conducts the Barefoot Band in her own re-orchestration of the opera, with an English translation.

Director **Sam Brown** comments: "Così fan tutte - one of Mozart's greatest accomplishments and one of the highlights of Western art. For me it's a huge honour to be invited to direct this opera at Longborough and I am looking forward to my collaboration with Lesley Anne, Polly and the whole team at LFO enormously. Così is a dream piece for me - I can't wait to get started."

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: "I'm delighted to be collaborating with conductor **Robert Howarth** on *The Return of Ulysses* - Monteverdi's beautiful, compassionate drama of homecoming. Though one of the earliest operas it feels startlingly modern. This will be performed on period instruments, but the production will reflect the drama through a contemporary lens."

For a taste of things to come, Polly has directed a short animated film by illustrator Amber Cooper-Davies, inspired by the opera: <https://lfo.org.uk/news/the-return-of-ulysses-a-short-animated-film>

Janáček *The Cunning Little Vixen*

The season comes to an end with a performance of Janáček's beautiful take on the cycle of life, *The Cunning Little Vixen*, conducted by **Justin Brown** and directed by **Olivia Fuchs**. This will be a performance by Longborough's Emerging Artists – talented artists at the start of their careers – who will be joined by the Longborough Youth Chorus of local children.

Polly Graham comments: "This is one of the greatest operas ever written, Wagnerian in its scope but brilliantly concise. It shifts from the comic world of everyday village life into the mystical cycle of the natural world - perfect for Longborough. It's so exciting to bring together our local Youth Chorus and the national talent that's reflected in the Emerging Artists program and to set them to work on this masterpiece. I cannot wait to see how it comes together. We hope to see you there."

How to Buy Tickets

Tickets will go on public sale in March 2021, with priority booking available to members of Longborough Festival Opera. Further information can be found at <https://lfo.org.uk/>

The Longborough Podcast

In June 2020, Longborough Festival Opera launched a new podcast, featuring today's brightest stars for a series of conversations about the world of opera.

The Longborough Podcast offers listeners the opportunity to hear directly from the artists and figures at the forefront of the industry. Each episode explores a particular composer, work or role, welcoming friends from the world of opera and the arts – including singers, players, directors, conductors and more – for some thought-provoking discussions.

The podcast is available free of charge at lfo.org.uk/podcast and on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, Acast and Stitcher.

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.

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.