

# GRANGE PARK OPERA

Est. 1998

## Office

Grange Park Opera  
Sutton Manor Farm  
Bishops Sutton  
Alresford  
SO24 0AA

01962 73 73 60  
info@grangeparkopera.co.uk  
grangeparkopera.co.uk

## THE YOUNG ARE THE FUTURE TOMORROW'S ARTISTS & TOMORROW'S AUDIENCE

### BACKGROUND TO THE ORGANISATION

In less than two decades, Grange Park Opera has established itself as one of Europe's leading opera festivals and become synonymous not only with artistic excellence, but the warmth of the relationship shared between loyal audiences, supporters and artists.

For 18 years, the festival was held at The Grange in Hampshire, but from 2017 it moves to West Horsley Place, recently inherited by author Bamber Gascoigne.

Glowing brick facades, framed by antique box hedges and walled gardens, sit in the midst of a 300-acres estate slumbering in the Surrey countryside. Behind the house, an ancient orchard opens into a wooded glade, which is to become the setting for a new cultural venue, the Theatre in the Woods. Here Grange Park Opera will realise the next chapter in its quest to make world-class performing art accessible to all. (Each night of the season there will be 50 affordable seats dedicated to under 30s).

Over 18 years we have staged 55 productions and presented nearly 500 performances. From the beginning there was an ambition at GPO to stage world-class productions that inspire, challenge and entertain. It has become known as a small jewel with big performances; a thriving organisation of national and international importance.

### TOMORROW'S ARTISTS

**SCHOLARSHIPS** Throughout their professional lives, singers need lessons/coaching. At a time when their earning capacity is lowest, the need for this costly training is greatest in order for them to achieve their potential.

Alongside international artists in principal roles, we employ 60 younger singers: in the chorus, as understudies and in smaller roles. They benefit greatly from the skill and experience of their elders.

During the audition process, certain younger singers stand out as exceptional. Of those, some are not managing to finance lessons/coaching. This comes to light in their response to the question, "when did you last have a lesson?" It is these singers who need support. **We monitor how their scholarship is spent by paying teachers directly and we evaluate vocal progress by re-auditioning.**

The size of a scholarship varies; some of these young singers might receive £500 towards lessons or coaching as they learn their cover role. In a few cases though this support will be more significant.

**PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT** The ethos of Grange Park Opera is to nurture young singers in operas with high production values.

They start off in the chorus. Younger artists partly learn by example. Sharing the stage with international artists, they learn not just how to conduct themselves on stage, but how to prepare, warm up, pace their performances and rest. They watch and they learn.

After a year or two they might be given a small named role in one of the operas and they might "cover" (understudy) a role. Perhaps one day, they will be cast in a larger role in one of the "big" operas.

Mexican tenor Jesus Leon has taken this route. In 2013 he sang Arturo in *I Puritani* having appeared in the smaller roles and been awarded a scholarship to study with Mirelli Freni in Modena, Italy. He has since been given a salaried post in a German opera house.

## SOME EXAMPLE TESTIMONIALS FROM PAST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

I am very grateful to Grange Park Opera for the scholarship that they offered me for the 2016 summer festival season. This generous scholarship has allowed me the opportunity to further my vocal and musical studies in to the lyric tenor repertoire and beyond. With the benefit of this funding I have been able to continue to study with leading vocal teachers and coaches, and without it I would not have been able to continue my study and transition in to the heavier Italian and German repertoire. This continued education has helped to grow my voice in an extremely rich and resonant way, and I can't thank Grange Park Opera enough for all their assistance and guidance.

**Simon Gilkes** tenor; sang Trin *La Fanciulla del West*

I would like to thank Grange Park Opera for their generous support in granting me a scholarship for the 2016 season. This scholarship has enabled me to maintain a consistent amount of singing lessons with teacher Robert Dean throughout this contract that I would otherwise not have been able to afford. This has helped me enormously to develop my vocal technique, to prepare for my solo in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*, and beyond. As a result of this consistency of singing lessons I have maintained my vocal health whilst rehearsing and performing as part of the Grange Park Opera chorus, and successfully auditioned for English Touring Opera who have offered me a contract in the Spring 2017 season. I therefore feel that this scholarship has helped opening doors to future engagements. I have also extremely enjoyed and benefitted from the coaching sessions with head of music Philip White who has been a great help to me. I feel very privileged to be performing at Grange Park Opera a solo role in *Tristan und Isolde* with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra conducted by Martyn Brabbins. **Felix Kemp** baritone; sang Melot *Tristan*

It was truly wonderful to be supported by the Grange Park scholarship. It gave me a chance to have extra coaching with formidable artists like Della Jones, Roger Vignoles, Joan Rogers, David Parry and many other brilliant musicians, who made the process of learning and exploring the roles I was singing simply magical. Together with singing experience at Grange Park Opera and working with wonderful directors and conductors I feel it took my singing to the next level, closer to the desired highest international career and I am extremely grateful for the Grange Park Opera scholarship.

**Iлона Domnich** soprano; sang Jacqueline *Fortunio*

## TOMORROW'S AUDIENCE

Alongside our scholarship scheme, Grange Park Opera has a second scheme for young people and the future of the arts. There follows a brief summary, for the Trust's information.

Grange Park Opera wants to make opera accessible and affordable for young people. Seven years ago we began two initiatives to help younger people see our operas.

### MUSICAL CHAIRS - FREE SEATS FOR UNDER 25s

Free seats are aimed at young people who simply would otherwise not be able to come to the opera.

Musical Chairs tickets: 2014: 190  
2015: 225  
2016: 167

### METEORS - AFFORDABLE SEATS FOR UNDER 30s

In January 2013 we formed a Meteor Board (all Under 30s) who have plenty of ideas. There are now over 1,000 Under 30s registered with Grange Park Opera. They can buy seats from £25 and we help with transport arrangements.

Meteor tickets: 2014: 217  
2015: 246  
2016: 257