



Come and Sing Opera! 2025

10am-5pm on Saturday 20th September 2025 at Trinity-Henleaze URC Church, Bristol BS9 4BT

PROGRAMME

for informal performance at 4pm

Chorus of wedding guests (*Lucia di Lammermoor*)

Donizetti (1797 – 1848)

Arturo – Robert Felstead (tenor)

The opera is based on Walter Scott's novel, *The Bride of Lammermoor*. This scene is from Act 2 of the opera, where Lucia is about to be wed to Arturo, in a marriage arranged by her brother. Arturo has just arrived at the castle and makes his pledge, to great celebration. Meanwhile Lucia is upset and withdrawn, as she is in love with Edgardo, who is away in France.

Later in the story comes Lucia's famous mad scene, which follows the horrific discovery that she has killed Arturo. In her delirium, she imagines marrying her beloved Edgardo, before collapsing. Not longer after, she dies and shortly after, Edgardo kills himself.

Bristol Opera has never staged *Lucia di Lammermoor*, but has performed other Donizetti operas, including the comedies *L'Elisir d'Amore* and *Il Campanello di Notte*.

Voyagers' chorus (*Idomeneo*)

Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Elettra – Sophie Kirk-Harris (soprano)

The story is set in Crete, in the aftermath of the Trojan War. In this scene, Cretan prince Idamante and Greek princess Elettra are about to set sail from Crete, bound for Argos, her home. The people have come to the seashore to see them go.

We briefly represent the march to the shore and then Elettra reflects on her mixed feelings. She is dismayed that Idamante is engaged to marry a Trojan princess, to seal the peace after the Trojan War, and not her; but rather pleased that he has first to escort her on the journey.

This beautiful chorus follows, praising the calm seas and blessing their departure.

Bristol Opera performed *Idomeneo* in 2015.

Habanera (*Carmen*)

Bizet (1838 – 1875)

Carmen – Rebecca Chellappah (mezzo-soprano)

The scene is from Act 1 of *Carmen*, when the cigarette girls are coming out of the factory in Seville. Among the waiting crowds, the young men most want to get the attention of Carmen and to know who she'll choose. In the famous Habanera, with its distinctive rhythm, Carmen compares love to a rebellious bird, which refuses to be tamed.

Eventually, she will throw a flower to corporal Don José, thus setting in motion a fixation which turns out utterly ruinous for him in the developing story, as he descends from honourable soldier to desperate outlaw.

Bristol Opera has staged *Carmen* five times since 1965. The most recent production was in 2017, with Rebecca in the title role.

Duet (Carmen)

Micaela – Sophie Kirk-Harris (soprano)

Don José – Robert Felstead (tenor)

Shortly after the Habanera scene, Don José's childhood sweetheart and betrothed arrives. She has travelled from his home village, bringing a message from his mother. They sing a duet together about happy memories of home. Yet we know that Don José's thoughts are already pulling him away.

Easter Hymn (Cavalleria Rusticana)**Mascagni (1863 – 1945)**

Santuzza – Sophie Kirk-Harris (soprano)

Lucia – Rebecca Chellappah (mezzo-soprano)

Alfio – Robert Felstead (baritone)

The one-act opera is a story of intense passion and jealousy, set in an idyllic Sicilian village on Easter day. In this chorus, the villagers are calmly going into church for the Easter morning service. All the while, Santuzza is distressed as she has just heard confirmation of her worst fears of betrayal by her former lover, Turiddu.

At the end of the previous scene, Alfio the carter has just come home for Easter, with great excitement. He has come straight to his mother Lucia's inn. He says that as he drove in, he spotted Turiddu near his cottage. Santuzza knows that Turiddu has started an affair with Alfio's wife but keeps quiet, simmering in distress while others go into church.

Later that day, everything comes to light, leading to a duel which takes place off stage. The opera ends with the news that Turiddu has been killed.

Bristol Opera has staged *Cavalleria Rusticana* four times since 1963, with the most recent production in 2016.

Opening chorus (The Bartered Bride)**Smetana (1824 – 1884)**

Marina – Sophie Kirk-Harris (soprano)

Johnny – Robert Felstead (tenor)

The village is celebrating May Day, with plenty of good cheer and dancing, but all is not well for Marina. Her impoverished parents have arranged to marry her off to a bridegroom from a wealthy family. But she loves Johnny, and confides her troubles to him during a break in the dancing.

The Bartered Bride is this year's main production for Bristol Opera, with performances set for 15-18th April 2026. We are looking to expand the chorus and welcome new singers to rehearsals, which begin on Thursday 2nd October.

Bristol Opera has staged *The Bartered Bride* five times since 1931, with the most recent previous production in 2007.

Chorus of the Hebrew slaves (Nabucco)**Verdi (1813 – 1901)**

This is the opera, and more specifically the chorus, which first brought Verdi acclaim as a composer. The title refers to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, under whose rule the Hebrews were exiled and enslaved in the 6th century BC, as recorded in the Bible.

The chorus expresses the longing of the Hebrew slaves for their homeland. When it was written, it was strongly interpreted as supporting the Italian unification movement, of which it became the unofficial anthem. It continues to have a powerful resonance for all displaced peoples and those whose territory is under threat.

Bristol Opera staged *Nabucco* in 1980 and 1999.

Thank you for supporting Bristol Opera and we look forward to seeing you again!