



Garsington & Glyndebourne

The Queen of Spades, Fidelio, Saul, Le nozze di Figaro

26–30 June 2025 (ML 724)

£4,040 • 5 days

Speaker: Dr John Allison

Four operas at two of England's highest quality country-house opera festivals – Garsington & Glyndebourne.

The Queen of Spades | Tchaikovsky at Garsington. Aaron Cawley, Laura Wilde, Diana Montague, Robert Hayward, Roderick Williams, Stephanie Wake-Edwards, Sam Furness, Simon Shibambu.

Fidelio | Beethoven at Garsington. Robert Murray, Sally Matthews, Musa Ngqungwana, Jonathan Lemalu, Isabelle Peters, Oliver Johnston, Richard Burkhard.

Saul | Handel at Glyndebourne. Christopher Purves, Iestyn Davies, Sarah Brady, Soraya Mafi, Linard Vrielink.

Le nozze di Figaro | Mozart at Glyndebourne. Michael Nagl, Anna El-Khashem, Huw Montague Rendall, Louise Alder, Adèle Charvet, Alessandro Corbelli.

When landowner John Christie built a small opera house for his professional soprano wife in the rolling Sussex Downs, he unwittingly founded Country House Opera. The Glyndebourne Festival started there in 1934 with two Mozart operas, and since then its popularity has inexorably grown. Today, Glyndebourne epitomises the English summertime.

Several other venues have followed Glyndebourne's example and Garsington has also established a sterling reputation for the world-class standard of its opera festival. Founded in 1989 by the owner of Garsington Manor, an estate near Oxford where the Bloomsbury Group often congregated during the 1920s, the Festival moved in 2011 to a purpose-built theatre at nearby Wormsley Park, the home of Mark Getty in Buckinghamshire. Late afternoon and evening light become part of the performance at this pavilion.

Accompanied by musicologist Dr John Allison, there are daily talks on all four operas.

Itinerary

Day 1: Maidenhead, Garsington. The coach leaves Maidenhead railway station at 11.45am for the short drive to the hotel. After a light lunch and a talk leave mid-



Lithograph 1902.

afternoon for Garsington. *The Queen of Spades* (Tchaikovsky): Jack Furness (director), Douglas Boyd (conductor), Aaron Cawley (Hermann), Laura Wilde (Lisa/Chloe), Diana Montague (The Countess), Robert Hayward (Count Tomskey/Plutus), Roderick Williams (Prince Yeletsky), Stephanie Wake-Edwards (Pauline / Daphnis), Sam Furness (Tchekalinsky), Simon Shibambu (Sournin), Philharmonia Orchestra. The performance begins at 5.20pm. A picnic supper is served during the long interval. First of two nights in Marlow.

Day 2: Marlow, Garsington. A morning lecture is followed by a visit to Cookham, life-long home to painter Stanley Spencer (1891–1959); there is a gallery of his work and a fine parish church. By coach to Garsington in the afternoon for *Fidelio* (Beethoven): Jamie Manton (director), Gérard Korsten (conductor), Robert Murray (Florestan), Sally Matthews (Leonore), Musa Ngqungwana (Don Pizarro), Jonathan Lemalu (Rocco), Isabelle Peters (Marzelline), Oliver Johnston (Jaquino), Richard Burkhard (Don Fernando), The English Concert. The performance begins at 5.55pm. Dinner is served during the long interval.

Day 3: Marlow, Eastbourne, Glyndebourne. By coach from Marlow to The Grand Hotel,

Eastbourne. After a lecture in the afternoon, by coach to Glyndebourne. *Saul* (Handel): Barrie Kosky (director), Jonathan Cohen (conductor), Christopher Purves (Saul), Iestyn Davies (David), Sarah Brady (Merab), Soraya Mafi (Michal), Linard Vrielink (Jonathan), Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. The performance begins at 5.00pm. A picnic supper is served in the long interval. First of two nights in Eastbourne.

Day 4: Eastbourne, Glyndebourne. A lecture in the morning is followed by a visit to Towner Eastbourne (formerly Towner Art Gallery). Highlights of its permanent collection include work by Eric Ravilious, Christopher Wood, Alfred Wallis and Edward Burra. Coach in the early afternoon to Glyndebourne. *Le nozze di Figaro* (Mozart): Mariame Clément (director), Riccardo Minasi (conductor), Michael Nagl (Figaro), Anna El-Khashem (Susanna), Huw Montague Rendall (Count Almaviva), Louise Alder (Countess Almaviva), Adèle Charvet (Cherubino), Alessandro Corbelli (Bartolo). Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. The performance begins at 4.00pm. Dinner is served in the long interval.

Day 5: Eastbourne. There is a coach transfer to Eastbourne Railway Station at 11.10am. Trains

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continued

to London Victoria leave every 30 minutes and take approximately 1 hour 30 minutes.

Opera tickets are confirmed in January.

Lecturer

Dr John Allison. Editor of *Opera* magazine and music critic for *The Daily Telegraph*. He was born in South Africa and completed his PhD degree while playing the piano and working as assistant organist at Cape Town cathedral. Since moving to London in 1989 he has written for publications around the world, authored two books, contributed chapters to several other volumes and served on the juries of many international competitions. He has also held positions as music critic on *The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Times*.

Practicalities

Price, per person. Two sharing: £4,040
Single occupancy: £4,410.

Included: four opera tickets costing c.£980; opera festival programmes; private air-conditioned coach; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, one lunch and all four dinners (including two picnic dinners) with wine, water and coffee; tips for restaurant staff and drivers; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. The Compleat Angler, Marlow (macdonaldhotels.co.uk/compleat-angler): comfortable 4-star hotel, well-positioned beside the Thames with excellent views. **The Grand Hotel, Eastbourne** (grandeastbourne.com): 5-star seafront hotel overlooking the cliffs at Beachy Head. *Single rooms are doubles for sole use throughout.*

How strenuous? The tour would be a struggle for anyone whose walking is impaired. There is a short walk from the coach park to the opera house. Average distance by coach per day: 49 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.