

GLYNDEBOURNE

SPRING 2018

NEWS



Production Hub Update • Casting Festival 2018

Creative space

During 2018 a new Production Hub will be built on the site of our previous props and wig workshops. This will become home to Glyndebourne's props, carpentry, costume, make-up and wig departments, as well as a state-of-the-art dance studio and much needed music practice rooms. **Charlie Snee**, Membership Co-ordinator, spoke to the prop makers to find out more about what this means for them.



Architect's impression of the new Production Hub which is inspired by a traditional Sussex barn

Listening to Paul Brown, Head of Props, it is clear that his team made exceptional things happen in a space they had outgrown. I have always been in awe of the work they achieve, but I hadn't realised that the pressure for space had been their enemy.

I've come to a temporary workshop near Ringmer, home to the props team whilst their old building is demolished. It is surprisingly light and open, and Paul shows me round the current projects they are working on. Most of the central floor space is taken up by the props for next year's production of *Saul*. The flowers, fruit and food that appear on the banquet tables are being safely packed up, having been checked and repaired where necessary (*Saul* was recently performed at the Adelaide

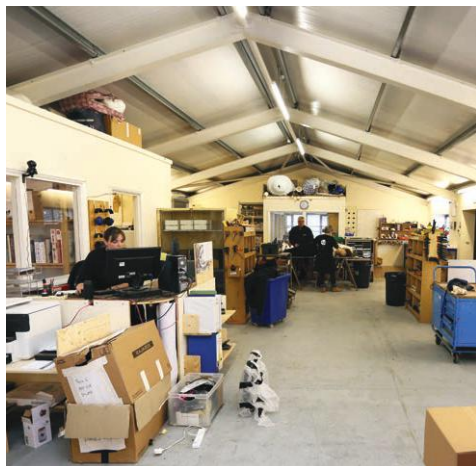
Festival, Australia). 'We had to move 30 tonnes of materials and equipment over from the old workshop. It has been a lot of work to get set up,' he says. But work for the props team rarely slows down. Paul is, I think, surprised at how well the team have adapted to the move and the temporary space. It could have been much trickier but 'everyone is on board and excited.'

Over three years ago the idea of refurbishing the props workshop to provide more space was just a dream. The temporary building already has areas assigned to particular activities – a sewing room, areas for welding, painting. The old workshop had some of these spaces added on after the original build, but it was never ideal. And these changes only solved part of the problem as Paul explains: 'We were

asking for money to be spent on the building so we could keep using it, not to improve it.' And props weren't alone in requiring a better, more usable space. The Hector studio, housed beside the props building was often used for dance rehearsals, but it wasn't as wide as the proscenium arch on stage, so transferring to the main stage was often challenging.

There were plenty of things that needed fixing and some of them just couldn't be done in the available building. Once Paul was given the go ahead to start thinking about a new space that would fulfil their needs, the ideas were plentiful. Visits to other theatre workshops – Royal Opera House (ROH) Thurrock and the National Theatre – helped cement ideas of how a new build could work.

The Production Hub project is being managed by Glyndebourne's Technical Director Eric Gautron and Sarah Hopwood, Chief Operating Officer. Nicholas Hare Architects were appointed in 2017 to design the new building, and as part of the design process, Paul was tasked with putting a brief together for the props part of the project (other heads of department including Pauline Lecrass, costume; Dave Turner, stage; Sarah Piper, make-up and Sheila Slaymaker, wigs; had to



Above: temporary work space
Below: the props team

do the same for their department's needs): 'Analysing in depth the way that you work isn't something you often have to do. We have had to plot out the way we work with colleagues in other teams.' Paul shows me the diagrams that illustrate the links between teams. 'It helped us focus on what we needed', he says. From these it is clear that the main props office is the centre of the team's work – where requests arrive and are divided up and assigned – so this had to be easily reached by colleagues coming across from the main theatre building and the other departments, as well as acting as a central hub for the props team themselves.

The outward design of the building was selected to fit into the landscape, inspired by the look and feel of a Sussex-style barn, it will blend into the landscape. Glyndebourne's Garden Adviser, John Hoyland and Head Gardener, Kevin Martin, are also involved and will ensure that landscaping around the Production Hub works as well as the building itself.

The heavy duty areas – props and carpentry – will be housed on the ground level, with costume, wigs, make-up and rehearsal spaces upstairs. All areas will be linked by glass walkways, providing great scope to include these making areas on our audience tours. The offices vacated by the costume department will





Architect's impression of how the current costume building (left) will sit beside the new Production Hub

house the costume store (currently off site), which will be linked to the Production Hub by a covered walkway – a significant improvement in efficiency.

Deciding where everyone would work was quick to materialise: 'Once we had the space decided we began to figure out which rooms we could use for what,' Paul explains. 'With a workshop it isn't enough just to fit all the machinery in, you have to be able to use it too.' In the carpenter's workshop for example, this meant plotting a layout for the room, and then checking whether it would work with scale models of the largest pieces of wood they work with.

Currently, the props team are in the midst of 'deciding where to put light switches, plug sockets, how doors need to open if your hands are full of props' on the architect's plans. Prop makers Ruby, Rose and Bryony all return the same answer when I ask what they are most looking forward to – 'the space!' they chorus. Paul adds 'it won't radically change

what we do, but the new building will allow us to concentrate on the craft rather than the logistics.' In the old building projects couldn't run concurrently – 'we couldn't paint whilst someone was sanding wood nearby for example, in the new building we'll have more space to be creative' he adds.



The old buildings have now been demolished to make way for the new Production Hub. They were dismantled carefully to enable a large amount of the wood and steel to be taken away for recycling. The brick walls and old concrete floors have been ground up to make a rubble mix which will be used in the base of the new building. We have committed to recycle 96% of the materials from the demolished buildings. We have also committed to keeping the impact of the new building to a minimum. The entire project has been designed to achieve BREEAM Excellent standard. This measures the sustainability of a building, including 'low impact design and carbon emissions reduction; design durability and resilience; adaption to climate change; and ecological value and biodiversity protection.' Look out for more information in the next edition of *Glyndebourne News*.



Thinking outside the box

The life of every new opera production presented at Glyndebourne starts with a 'black box' – this is the scale replica of the stage space sent to every designer.

The designer works in collaboration with the director to produce a white card model or 'sketch model' which is presented to Glyndebourne's Technical Director and General Director so that they can convey their vision for their new production. Once these ideas are given the green light, the next phase of the process is for the creative team to create the final model and share

it with the Glyndebourne company, along with costume drawings. Following this, work can begin on creating the production you finally see on stage.

Below we can give you a sneak peak at the final *Vanessa* model and to put this into perspective we've added the model box for *Madama Butterfly* and then a photograph to illustrate how this came to life at its Glyndebourne premiere for the Tour in 2016. What *Vanessa* will actually look like on stage will be revealed when it opens on Sunday 5 August.



Top left:
Vanessa model
box

Top right:
*Madama
Butterfly* model
box

Bottom:
The set comes to
life in *Madama
Butterfly*, Tour
2016

Casting *Vanessa*



As part of our *Introducing...* series **Andrew Batty**, Digital Content Editor, spoke to Casting Consultant **Pål Christian Moe** about finding the right singers for our new production of Samuel Barber's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Vanessa*.

'We always start with the voice – they have to be able to sing the role. Then they have to have the suitability for the character, and the right sensibility for the piece' says Pål Moe, who has been working with Glyndebourne to cast our productions for 14 years.

'*Vanessa* is a naturalistic chamber piece with a very defined setting and characters' says Moe, meaning that from the offset the casting team had a clear idea of the kinds of singers they wanted for the roles.

This taut psychological thriller centres around a trio of complex individuals – Vanessa, her niece Erika and Anatol, the son of Vanessa's former lover.

'Vanessa is a prima-donna role [famously

Maria Callas was Barber's first choice for the role in the original production]. You need a strong personality who can do eccentricity and a sort of haughtiness. She's a character who's on the borderline of being delusional' says Moe.

In Emma Bell the casting team has found a performer who can bring the complex emotional world of the character to life, 'Emma is a really important British singer, with a lot of stage presence and has just the combination of qualities we were looking for'. Emma will be familiar to Glyndebourne audiences from her appearances in *Rodelinda* (1998), *The Turn of the Screw* (2007) and *The Cunning Little Vixen* (2012).

Although the opera bears the name of the glamorous Vanessa, in many ways her quiet, thoughtful niece Erika is the focus of story. 'In a way Erika is the main character of this piece, that's where the conflict is centred' says Moe, 'it's Erika who experiences suffering and heartbreak'.

Taking on the role of Erika is Glyndebourne newcomer Virginie Verrez. 'I heard Virginie sing when she was studying in New York, and had been looking for a role for her for a while' says Moe, 'as the role came up I happened to hear her sing in a concert version of *Vanessa* in Berlin. She's perfect for the role. Virginie has this strength and can hold her own against Emma and Edgaras [Montvidas] as Vanessa and Anatol.'

For the mysterious Anatol, Pål Moe and the



Virginie Verrez will sing the role of Erika in *Vanessa*

Top: Mike Hoban Bottom: Richard Hubert Smith
 casting team were looking for someone who could convey both charm and cruelty; 'At first Anatol is quite an ambiguous character, but by the end you realise that he's really this high-class con artist, all he wants is the money and he destroys Erika along the way. For the role you need an attractive big lyric tenor, someone elegant, yet manipulative.'

Cast as Anatol is Edgaras Montvidas, who previously played Lensky in *Eugene Onegin* (2014) and Belmonte in *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (2015). This role will be something of a departure from the roles Festival audiences are used to seeing him in, 'the funny thing is that Edgaras has been very likeable in his two previous appearances, but here he has the opportunity to depict a darker character'.

There is a particular moment Moe is looking forward to seeing the performers bring to life on stage – 'the New Year's Eve ball scene where you see personal tragedy unfold against a background of public festivity.'



Emma Bell in *The Turn of the Screw*, 2007

The 2018 Festival isn't the only important Glyndebourne date in Moe's diary. This spring he will be part of the judging panel for The Glyndebourne Opera Cup, our inaugural singing competition. Along with an incredible voice, he is looking out for singers with 'presence and a sense of style'.

Glyndebourne has long been known for the opportunities it offers singers at the beginning of their careers, 'I can't think of many companies who employ more emerging talent than Glyndebourne and it's a great tradition' he says.



Edgaras Montvidas as Lensky in *Eugene Onegin*, 2014

Casting – a singer's perspective

The casting process is a central part of life as a professional opera singer. To find out more about the experience of being cast and the process of preparing for a role, **Kate Harvey**, Press Manager, spoke to three artists performing in Festival 2018.

Boris Streubel



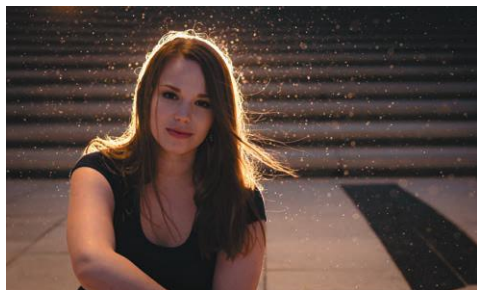
German mezzo-soprano Doris Soffel (*above*) makes her Glyndebourne debut in the role of the Old Baroness in *Vanessa*. During an eminent international career she has performed at the world's biggest opera houses. How does she decide which roles to accept? 'If it's a new role, my key considerations are: is it an interesting one in an interesting opera? Does this particular role match my voice and my personality? Who sang this role in the past?' says Soffel. 'Christa Ludwig's repertoire is often a reference to me, and in this case it's Regina Resnik, who sang the Old Baroness in the prime of her career.'

Once she has accepted a role, Soffel starts to study the music, reading through the score with a pianist and listening to recordings. 'If it is possible within my schedule, I really plunge into it... I love to be fully prepared when rehearsals start.'

Having learnt both music and text, her next step is to research the composer and his intentions. 'Understanding what the world was like at the time of the composition and

how this opera, this role, could be interpreted and understood today – all this is discussed and examined more closely together with the creative team during the working process. It's fun to analyse and consider how one should add one's own personality as a dimension to the role. Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* is a masterpiece. The music is so expressive, the plot is very interesting. This solitary and mysterious personality of the Old Baroness is fascinating and challenging. She is a character who is not easy to define. I look forward to working on that with Keith Warner (director).'

Also making her Glyndebourne debut this summer is up-and-coming Austrian soprano Christina Gansch (*below*). The Kathleen Ferrier Award-winner will sing the role of Mélisande



Kartal Karagedik

in a new production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. 'The casting process for this part went through various stages,' she remembers. 'I first got an invitation from Glyndebourne in 2015 to come to one of their general auditions. After that, a few weeks passed before I heard back – Glyndebourne was interested in

hearing me in another audition for *Mélisande* in 2018.'

To grasp the opportunity, Gansch had to prepare carefully. 'I had to be honest with myself, I didn't know the opera very well and had never looked at the role of *Mélisande*. It meant I had to spend extra time preparing before the audition. At the time I was part of the young artists' programme at the Hamburg State Opera where, as luck would have it, I was working on another opera project with Stefan Herheim [the director of *Pelléas et Mélisande*]. After auditioning for *Mélisande* for Robin Ticciati, and getting to know the director, the offer came in a few months later.'

After studying the opera, Gansch has come to love the role. 'What I find interesting about *Mélisande* is that you can't easily "get" her,' she says. 'Usually when I learn a role the characters are quite understandable – a person and a character that I can usually identify with at some level and then try to get into that character. With *Mélisande* it is very different. Sometimes when I think I have her character, she suddenly does something I do not understand. I find this fascinating on so many levels and I think it'll make the work on this new production even more interesting.'

As well as learning the music, Gansch has been working with French language coaches and is currently looking for a house to rent for the summer. Her expectations of working at Glyndebourne are very high. 'Every colleague who has worked at Glyndebourne praises it and tells me how lucky I am,' she says. 'It has such a good reputation artistically, for its backstage work and for the organisational aspects of the Festival. Plus there is a long rehearsal period, which is a luxury!'

Our third singer needs little introduction to Glyndebourne audiences. British bass Brindley Sherratt has performed regularly for the company since 2002, most recently in the role of Claggart in *Billy Budd* in 2013 (above). Next summer he appears in two productions – *Pelléas et Mélisande* (as Arkel) and *Der*

Rosenkavalier, in which he performs the role of Baron Ochs. This role is a new one for him, performing it for the first time in 2017 in four performances for Welsh National Opera.



Richard Hubert Smith

'For many years people said to me, 'you'd really enjoy doing Ochs', he remembers. 'I wasn't entirely sure at first because I thought, how does anybody ever sing it or learn it, if you've not done it before? I came to see *Der Rosenkavalier* in 2014 when it was new and thought, I'd love to do it now. A little while later my agent said to me, "I've put you forward". It took ages to confirm but eventually it came through and I heard in October 2015, relatively late for a large role. At that time I downloaded several recordings and went to Vienna to see it. I bought a brand new score and thought, right I'm starting now – I didn't want to get caught out. It took me a year and a half to learn it.'

In the meantime the opportunity arose to perform the role in WNO's production in summer 2017. 'There were only four performances tragically but I have done it now and it's under my belt so now I'm really looking forward to this year.'

How does the lengthy build-up for Baron Ochs compare to preparing for a role that you've performed before, such as Arkel? 'If I'm doing performances of one piece, while preparing for another – performing *Rosenkavalier* while we're rehearsing *Pelléas* – I will probably sing the next role through a few times in between performances, just to start thinking about it,' Sherratt explains. 'I've done Arkel twice

now and because there's plenty of rehearsal time, and I did it fairly recently in Frankfurt, I probably won't have the energy or the time to do much study before I start.'

His preparations for a new role include researching the work and composer. 'I like to do my own study,' he confirms. 'I need to look at the context, study who the character is, try to work out, how would I do this role? I have to find my own way of doing it.'

Sherratt was in his mid-30s before he launched a career as an opera singer. He built a name quickly so the casting experience now involves far fewer auditions. 'My last audition was about five years ago,' he explains. 'There's a general feeling as a singer that the more you go on, the harder auditions get. When you're young and you're starting out, auditions are what you do. You get geared up for it

and you accept that you have to do this in order to get on the ladder. But if you've had years of experience on stage at a high level, working with really great singers, conductors, directors, and then someone says to you, 'Can we hear you do so-and-so?', and suddenly you're on stage with an upright piano – it's really strange. It's like going back to interview for something that you did ten years ago.'

Having an established reputation has also influenced how he decides which roles to accept. 'There was a time when I would want to have a completely full diary and as a freelance, self-employed person, there's still a part of you that thinks like that. I'm 55 so as a bass I'm in the purple patch for a lot of roles and I'm interested in something that really gets me excited, I like trying new stuff out, even now at my grand old age!'

'Emergency Third Witch only'

As part of our focus on casting, Glyndebourne archivist **Julia Aries** looks back on how it used to happen back when the Festival was in its infancy.

When John Christie and Fritz Busch finally met face-to-face in January 1934, many of the preliminary details of the summer Mozart Festival had been decided; where, what, and how, the missing component was the 'who'. Christie had no idea how to run an opera house, but was sure, in his blinkered determination, that if he simply amplified the arrangements made to mount his previous 'am-dram' organ room entertainments, it would all come together... Fritz Busch put him straight – if this new venture was to succeed, it had to be done well.

What this meant for John Christie was a crash course in how opera was organised and run on the continent in order to produce the high

standard of performance he had been enjoying on his holiday visits, and which he wanted to re-create in his new opera house. There were issues around the orchestra selection ('No Mr Christie' said the Musicians Union 'you cannot simply bring foreigners in to play at public performances in England...') and then there was the challenge of finding the best singers the budget could afford.

From the outset, there were difficulties. Time was short. The artistic directors, Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert, had agreed to take part on the understanding that they would have the final say in who was engaged to perform, and everyone had to audition. Christie had agreed, but it didn't stop him making suggestions,



Fritz Busch and Rudolf Bing

being door-stepped by singers desperate to perform, and making promises he couldn't keep. The principal singers were primarily heard by Busch himself, and this included Audrey Mildmay – there were no favours for the boss's wife. Busch's audition

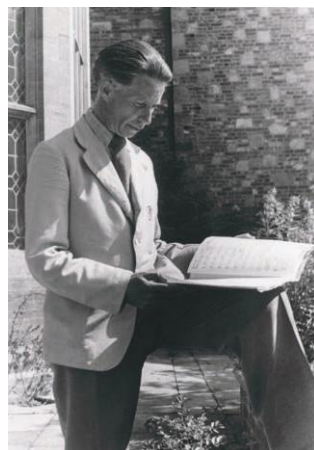
notes record 'a delightful voice, well-trained and full of artistry. Italian good. Strongly recommended. Properly used, her talent would have success in Dresden and Berlin.'

The fact that artists of such renown as Fritz Busch and Carl Ebert were involved in the fledgling enterprise certainly made things easier with the European candidates. Ebert's ex-colleague Rudolf Bing was contacted to scour Europe for singers suitable for the Mozart repertoire, and then negotiate the contracts. As the Festival went from strength to strength, the principal singers were drawn from far and wide – something which delighted Christie, who insisted on including a singer's nationality on all the cast pages. Rudolf Bing became general manager in 1936, and entered into lengthy correspondence with artistic agencies all over Europe looking for appropriate singers, and everyone was called on to go and listen to potential candidates – the designer Hamish Wilson found himself checking out a possible Lady Macbeth whilst in Italy visiting Ebert with a folder of stage designs for *Don Pasquale*...

The two music staff members tasked with auditioning singers for the chorus were Jani Strasser, Audrey's singing teacher from Vienna (who went on to become an integral part of Glyndebourne until his retirement in 1970), and Hans Oppenheim, a musician and good friend of Carl Ebert's. They sat through numerous sessions at the Wigmore and Aeolian halls in London, recording their thoughts and reactions on index cards, which we still hold today. Their comments are blunt, but they were looking for singers who could be trained to provide the best opera chorus possible, and what is noticeable is the overall lack of opera experience the candidates offered – choral and music theatre maybe, and many with no Italian, which presented a challenge for *Così* and *Figaro*. Penned before political correctness, their comments would not pass muster with our casting team today:

- 'Looks like an egg'
- 'Top harsh, bottom wheezy'
- 'Chorister of the worst sort'
- 'Good face and figure. Wooden leg.'
- 'Emergency Third Witch only'

If there was one thing that set Glyndebourne apart in the opera world of the 1930s, it was the quality of the singing. A brand new venture, in the middle of the countryside, with a dress code and an astonishing wine list, would probably have failed, but instead it garnered critical acclaim from the very first night, not just for the exquisite production, which was a revelation, but for the music and the ensemble. The British opera scene would never be the same again.



Hans Oppenheim

Belongings and beyond

Chris Stones, Senior Education Projects Manager, looks back on Lewis Murphy's tenure as Young Composer-in-Residence and ahead to the new community opera, *Agreed*, in 2019.

'Over three decades and often behind the scenes, Glyndebourne's education department has commissioned 32 composers... They have set a bold, risk-taking example.'

Fiona Maddocks, *The Observer*

New Year is traditionally a time for stocktaking and plan-making, for looking back and evaluating the recent past while getting ready for new adventures. In December Glyndebourne said goodbye to its latest Young Composer-in-Residence Lewis Murphy after three years. Highlights of his work here are the playful *A Garden Dream* featured alongside Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Festival 2016, and more recently the beautiful and moving youth opera *Belongings* which premiered on the Glyndebourne stage in November 2017.

Looking back on his time at Glyndebourne Lewis said: 'The Young Composer-in-Residence position at Glyndebourne has given me the

opportunity to allow my compositional voice to develop naturally, to see my work rehearsed and performed to an incredibly high standard, and generally to immerse myself in the workings of an international opera house.

'The highlight of this residency has undoubtedly been the performance of *Belongings* on the main stage at Glyndebourne in November 2017. It was a delight to see my work produced to such a high standard and to share it with such an enthusiastic and appreciative audience.

'I will always remember the wonderful three years I spent here as Young Composer-in-Residence, and I will continue to follow the work of the education department in particular with great interest. For me, Glyndebourne Youth Opera (GYO) represents the pinnacle of what can be achieved in the field of youth participation – the attitude of the young people, the standard of their singing, and the careful process by which they are prepared for performance, have been enormously inspiring.'

Belongings, Lewis's largest scale work to date, was a commission for GYO which featured a cast of 65 local young singers aged between 9 and 19 performing alongside soprano Nardus Williams, mezzo soprano Leslie Davis and baritone Rodney Earl Clark, accompanied by players



Lewis Murphy (right) during a performance of *A Garden Dream*

Belongings was performed on 10 and 11 November 2017



Robert Workman

from the LPO's Foyle Future Firsts orchestral development scheme. Both the schools' performance and the public performance were well received with emotions running high both on and off stage, with one audience member enthusing: 'It was mesmerising, thought provoking and very moving. I cried and I know I was not alone. A fantastic production that needs to be performed to a wider audience. It was a triumph!'

The film of *Belongings* will be available soon at glyndebourne.com.

Meanwhile Glyndebourne's education department has started its preparations for the next big commission – a two-act community opera which will be premiered in February 2019. The new work, entitled *Agreed*, is being written by composer Howard Moody and will be directed by Simon Iorio.

Moody and Iorio were also behind the powerful community opera *Push*, a collaboration between Glyndebourne and Battle Arts Festival which was performed in

Battle and at the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill as part of the 2016 Battle Arts Festival.

Auditions for *Agreed* will take place later in 2018 and information will be available at glyndebourne.com.



Sam Stephenson

Murphy (right) pictured in *Belongings* rehearsals with conductor Lee Reynolds



How does your garden grow?

Kevin Martin, Head Gardener, tackles a February garden



Vicky Skeet

We will be enjoying the snowdrops in the woodland and shady parts of the garden at Glyndebourne throughout February. When they have finished flowering towards the end of the month it will be time to lift and divide some of the clumps if we want to make more plants. Planting snowdrops ‘in the green’, after they have flowered but still have their leaves, is the best way to establish new plants. Use a spade to lift larger clumps and separate the clump into sections of a size that will fit into the palm of your hand. Replant the sections to the same depth in moist but well-drained soil straight away so that they don’t dry out, adding some grit or sharp sand if you have heavy soil.

The hellebores will have been flowering since December, and by February will benefit from some attention. Remove the old or diseased leaves of the plants to prevent the spread of hellebore leaf spot and allow insects to pollinate, and happily it also helps to show off the flowers.

Climbing shrubs such as wisteria and climbing roses are pruned in February.

Wisteria can be pruned twice a year, in July and February but the wisteria that grows against the house at Glyndebourne is so large that it’s a job for a cherry picker and we only tackle it once a year. In February we cut back the new shoots that grew in summer to two or three buds. As it is an old and well-established plant we may need to prune out worn or damaged growths by shortening stems back to the main branch or just above a younger branch.

The climbing roses are also pruned in February while they are dormant, taking out any old or dead stems at the base. Prune side shoots back by two thirds to just above a bud pointing in the right direction, and make sure that new shoots and branches are securely tied in to supports.

We hope that the weather will be warming up through February, allowing us to get on with garden jobs such as pruning. But it could be cold and frosty, or snowing. If it is frosty, don’t prune yet, and keep off the frosted grass – it will leave footprints in the lawn until the grass regrows in spring. Look for other jobs in the garden such as grubbing out, clearing brambles and ivy from under hedges, or cleaning the greenhouse. It is also a good time to make sure that the greenhouse is ready for all the spring sowing of seeds. Wash the glass inside and out, and remove any algae that gathers between the overlapping panes of glass; we find an old plant label an ideal tool for that job as it slips between the panes easily. Wash and brush out flower pots and make sure that tools are free of old soil and sharpened and oiled ready for use as the gardening year really gets under way.



How I spend the interval...

Our new column looks at how some of us spend the 90-minute dining interval during the Festival. **Jules Crocker**, House Manager, gives us a glimpse into her world.

As the curtain comes down and the applause begins, I'm usually waiting outside the auditorium doors by the set-down point. As the audience stream out, I'm ready if anyone needs help with directions, finding the restaurants or using the golf buggy. My role is to monitor everything that happens front of house, and making sure the audience enjoy their interval is crucial.

Sometimes people ask for directions to their picnics – it's a bit like parking your car in a huge car park and not being able to remember where you left it, but we always manage.

The interval is a wonderful time to enjoy the gardens but, of course, sometimes it's raining. During wet intervals, I'm busy finding places for people to sit under cover on the balconies or in the marquee, or handing out Glyndebourne umbrellas to those who want to venture out into the garden. If it starts raining during the first part of the opera we go out into the garden and cover picnics with plastic where we can, and help to bring picnics under cover.

The Organ Room is open during the interval so I'll call in there to check that all's well. I once had to help remove a blackbird that had flown in. Dealing with visiting wildlife is part of life in the country – we've had pigeons, swallows and doves in the upper circle terrace and bats in the auditorium. It's all part of the experience.

If I'm asked for advice I'd say that one of the best places to sit in the gardens when it's sunny is down by the lake as the sun will linger there longest. And for one of the best views over the countryside and grazing

sheep, sit on the Courtyard Lawn beside the ha-ha.

I love discovering the ingenious places our visitors have chosen to picnic – inside the Kitchen Garden greenhouse or hidden corners of the garden. And anything goes with picnics, I enjoy seeing everything from the simplest to the most lavish, with flowers, candles and lanterns adding to the atmosphere.

It's also fun to meet audience members as I walk about and hear what they're saying about the opera. There are so many familiar faces I see and of course people get to know me too, which can sometimes take me by surprise if we meet somewhere other than Glyndebourne.

If there's time I might pop into the New Green Room where the performers relax, or find time to start writing the Front of House (FOH) report for that night which includes anything that might have happened such as train or traffic delays, first aid calls, peacocks in the car park or a swarm of bees in the garden!

With 25 minutes to go before the end of the interval, I'm responsible for opening the house again. I go into the auditorium to liaise with the Stage Manager and when the stage is ready we open the doors. The audience hear the first bell ten minutes before curtain up, and I am in radio contact with the FOH team to ensure all areas are clear before we start. I'll do one last visual sweep of the house from the Blue Foyer Circle and then give the signal for the doors to be closed. The house lights go down. The interval's over, and it's curtain up.

Jules Crocker was interviewed by Vicky Skeet

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If you need to update your postal address please let us know in writing.

For information about corporate membership, advertising and entertaining, contact:
corporateinformation@glyndebourne.com

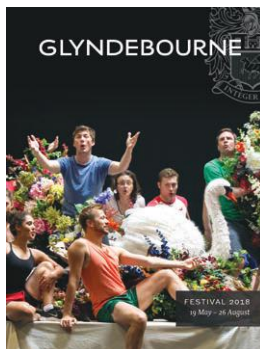
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Glyndebourne News is edited by [Karen Anderson](#)



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glyndebourne.com



Visit our website for news and up-to-date information about Festival and Tour.

Festival 2018

19 May – 26 August

Tour 2018

12 October –
1 December

glyndebourneshop.com

Visit the Glyndebourne Shop website for gifts and art inspired by the gardens, the South Downs and the opera presented on stage.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

19 February:

Second opportunity for Members to book Festival tickets

20 February:

Second opportunity for Associate Members to book Festival tickets

26 February: Under 30s booking opens

4 March: Public booking opens online

15 March: Priority booking for Glyndebourne cinema screenings opens

23 April: Tour Members' priority ballot begins

4 June: Public booking for Tour performances at Glyndebourne opens

MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO SEE OPERA ...

22 March 2018:

The Glyndebourne Opera Cup: Semi-final

24 March 2018:

The Glyndebourne Opera Cup: Final

Our Festival 2018 screenings are:

21 June: *Madama Butterfly* (Live)

26 July: *Saul* (Recorded live in 2015)

14 August: *Vanessa* (Live)

12 October – 1 December 2018:

Glyndebourne Tour 2018

Visit glyndebourne.com for more information