

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA

Opera that *moves*

English Touring Opera presents two brand new productions of Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* and Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims* in Spring 2023

Spring season also includes a revival of the acclaimed 2020 production of
Handel's *Giulio Cesare*

25 February – 27 May 2023

London, Poole, Sheffield, Norwich, York, Durham, Chester, Cambridge, Snape,
Canterbury, Cheltenham, Buxton, Leamington Spa and Exeter

English Touring Opera (ETO) presents its first season under the leadership of new General Director **Robin Norton-Hale** in Spring 2023, with a national tour of three deeply contrasting operas. The Spring 2023 season features two new productions of operas never before staged by ETO – Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* and Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*, each directed by women staging their first productions with ETO, as well as a revival of one of Handel's most beloved works, *Giulio Cesare*. The tour will take outstanding productions to audiences in 14 locations across England, making live opera accessible and available to all.

Period-instrument specialists **The Old Street Band** will play for all three operas, the first time the operas by Donizetti and Rossini have toured in the UK with a period instrument orchestra.

Donizetti's tragedy *Lucrezia Borgia* is staged for the first time by ETO, in a new production directed by **Eloise Lally**, making her ETO directorial debut. A thrilling and moving meditation on power and motherhood, *Lucrezia Borgia* is the tragedy of a complex woman in a dangerous situation. In *Lucrezia* Donizetti created one of opera's great antiheroines, as well as one of the most challenging roles in the soprano repertoire. **Paula Sides** stars in the title role, with **Thomas Elwin** as Gennaro, **Katie Coventry** as Orsini and **Aidan Edwards** as Alfonso, and ETO Music Director **Gerry Cornelius** conducts.

The tour also features a new production of Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*, another first for ETO. Intrigue, politics, romance and lost luggage all play their part in Rossini's last Italian opera, as a group of entitled guests from all over Europe are stranded in a provincial hotel on their way to a great coronation. Featuring a cast of 27 - one of the largest ever assembled by ETO - the production includes a host of talented young singers including **Lucy Hall** as Madame Cortese, **Luci Briginshaw** as Contessa di Folleville, **Susanna Hurrell** as Corinna and **Julian Henao Gonzalez** as Conte di Lebenskopf. **Valentina Ceschi**, who directed ETO's online opera *The Firebird* to great acclaim in 2022, makes her ETO theatrical directorial debut, and ETO Artist in Association **Jonathan Peter Kenny** conducts.

One of Handel's most loved operas, **Giulio Cesare**, also returns for the tour in a revival of ETO's acclaimed and popular 2017 production, with a planned 2020 revival curtailed by the pandemic. **James Conway** returns to direct, and **Susanna Hurrell** reprises her role as Cleopatra (noted by The Observer in 2020 as "*simultaneously coquettish, petulant and radiant... wins the audience's heart as surely as she wins Cesare's*"), with Cesare sung by countertenor **Francis Gush**, Cornelia by **Carolyn Dobbin** and Sesto by **Margo Arsane**. **Sergey Rybin** conducts **The Old Street Band** in some of Handel's finest music.

Robin Norton-Hale, General Director of ETO, said: "*This hugely ambitious season demands virtuosic singing and exceptional dramatic ability from our casts, in stories encompassing farce, social satire, political intrigue and epic tragedy. We're delighted to be working with two outstanding directors to present two operas ETO has never staged before. It will be the first time these operas have been performed at all of our tour venues, and it's even more of a treat to hear them performed on period instruments. Audiences can expect musical and dramatic fireworks!*"

The Spring 2023 announcement comes after the conclusion of their critically acclaimed *Handelfest* tour, which took three great Handel operas – *Tamerlano*, *Ottone* and *Agrippina* - to many thousands of people in seven venues across England. ETO also completed a successful run of *Tutankhamun's Shoes*, an opera for children exploring Ancient Egyptian history and mummification, in theatres, museums and schools around the country.

Alongside three theatre-based opera productions in Spring 2023, children across the country will also be able to experience the magic of opera in *The Wish Gatherer*, the first in a three-part series for Key Stage 2 focusing on helping children confront climate change, and *Zoo!*, their new opera for children aged 2-5 and audiences with special educational needs and disabilities – both led by emerging singers from the main tour.

More information and tickets for the Spring 2023 season can be found on [English Touring Opera's website](https://www.englishtouringopera.com).

-ENDS-

For more information, interview requests and press tickets, please contact Yasmin Hoy at Premier PR:

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Notes to Editors

English Touring Opera

Since 1979, English Touring Opera has toured outstanding live productions and impactful education and community projects to more towns and cities than any other UK opera company. At the heart of our ethos is making exceptional artistic experiences available and accessible to everyone. We reach 40,000 people per year with full theatre-based productions, specially commissioned operas for children and young people with special educational needs, a series of creative workshops for people with dementia and their carers, and more than 70 workshops for people of all abilities and ages.

[englishtouringopera.org.uk](https://www.englishtouringopera.org.uk)

Spring 2023 Programme

[Handel – Giulio Cesare](#)

Giulio Cesare – *Francis Gush*
Cleopatra – *Susanna Hurrell*
Cornelia – *Carolyn Dobbin*
Sesto – *Margo Arsane*
Achilla – *Edward Hawkins*
Tolomeo – *Alexander Chance*
Nireno – *Kieron-Connor Valentine*
Curio – *Edward Jowle*

Director – *James Conway*
Conductor – *Sergey Rybin*
Designer – *Cordelia Chisholm*
Repetiteur – *Satoko Doi-Luck*

Saturday 25 February 2023, 7.30pm – Hackney Empire, London
Friday 20 March 2023, 7.30pm – Lighthouse, Poole
Monday 13 March 2023, 7.45pm – Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield
Thursday 13 April 2023, 7.30pm – Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cambridge
Thursday 20 April 2023, 7.30pm – Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Snape
Friday 28 April 2023, 7.30pm – Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury
Thursday 4 May 2023, 7.30pm – The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham
Thursday 11 May 2023, 7.30pm – Buxton Opera House, Buxton
Friday 19 May, 7.30pm – Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
Thursday 25 May, 7.30pm – Exeter Northcott, Exeter

[Donizetti – Lucrezia Borgia](#)

Lucrezia Borgia – *Paula Sides*
Gennaro – *Thomas Elwin*
Orsini – *Katie Coventry*
Alfonso – *Aidan Edwards*
Astolfo – *Jerome Knox*
Liverotto – *Brenton Spiteri*
Vitellozzo – *Monwabasi Lindi*
Petrucci – *Peter Edge*
Gazella – *Phil Wilcox*
Rustighello – *Matthew McKinney*
Gubetta – *Edward Jowle*
Brigand - *Aaron O'Hare*
Brigand – *Masimba Ushe*
Brigand – *Ben Knight*

Director – *Eloise Lally*
Conductor – *Gerry Cornelius*
Designer – *Adam Wiltshire*
Repetiteur – *Nicholas Bosworth*

Friday 3 March, 7.30pm – Hackney Empire, London
Saturday 11 March, 7.30pm – Lighthouse, Poole
Tuesday 14 March, 7.45pm – Lyceum Theatre, Sheffield

Friday 17 March, 7.30pm – Theatre Royal, Norwich
Friday 24 March, 7.30pm – Theatre Royal, York
Monday 27 March, 7.30pm – Gala Theatre, Durham
Friday 31 March, 7.30pm – Storyhouse, Chester
Saturday 15 April, 7.30pm – Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cambridge
Friday 21 April, 7.30pm – Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Snape
Friday 5 May, 7.30pm – The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham
Friday 12 May, 7.30pm – Buxton Opera House, Buxton
Saturday 20 May, 7.30pm – Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa
Friday 26 May, 7.30pm – Exeter Northcott, Exeter

Rossini – Il viaggio a Reims

Madame Cortese – *Lucy Hall*
Contessa di Folleville – *Luci Briginshaw*
Corinna – *Susanna Hurrell*
Marchesa Melibea – *Esme Bronwen-Smith*
Conte di Libenskopf – *Julian Henao Gonzalez*
Chevalier Belfiore – *Richard Dowling*
Lord Sidney – *Edward Hawkins*
Brone di Trombonok – *Grant Doyle*
Don Prudenzio – *Jerome Knox*
Don Profondo – *Timothy Dawkins*
Modestina – *Lilo Evans*
Don Luigino – *Matthew McKinney*
Maddalena – *Hollie-Anne Bangham*
Antonio – *Edward Jowle*
Zefirino – *Brenton Spiteri*
Gelsomino – *Peter Edge*
Delia – *Eleanor Sanderson-Nash*
Ensemble/Player – *Katherine McIndoe*
Ensemble/Player – *Julia Mariko*
Ensemble/Player – *Rachel Speirs*
Ensemble/Player – *Sophie Dicks*
Ensemble/Player – *Monwabasi Lindi*
Ensemble/Player – *Aaron O'Hare*
Ensemble/Player – *Phil Wilcox*
Ensemble/Player – *Masimba Ushe*
Ensemble/Player – *Ben Knight*

Director – *Valentina Ceschi*
Conductor – *Jonathan Peter Kenny*
Designer – *Adam Wiltshire*
Repetiteur – *Paul McKenzie*

Saturday 4 March, 7.30pm – Hackney Empire, London
Saturday 18 March, 7.30pm – Theatre Royal, Norwich
Saturday 25 March, 7.30pm – Theatre Royal, York
Tuesday 28 March, 7.30pm – Gala Theatre, Durham

Saturday 1 April, 7.30pm – Storyhouse, Chester

Friday 14 April, 7.30pm – Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cambridge

Saturday 22 April, 7.30pm – Snape Maltings Concert Hall, Snape

Saturday 29 April, 7.30pm – Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury

Saturday 6 May, 7.30pm – The Everyman Theatre, Cheltenham

Saturday 13 May, 7.30pm – Buxton Opera House, Buxton

Saturday 27 May, 7.30pm – Exeter Northcott, Exeter