

Wild Arts brings Mozart and opera favourites to Surrey

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Opera will be coming to Surrey this summer as the touring company Wild Arts presents Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* in Guildford and at Titsey Place.

The production visits the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford on Friday 7 August before returning to the county for a performance at Titsey Place, near Oxted, on Sunday 6 September.

Titsey Place will also host *An Evening of Opera* on Saturday 5 September, combining well-known operatic arias with songs from classic musicals.

Founded in 2022, Wild Arts takes opera and classical music to theatres, country houses, gardens and other distinctive venues around the UK. Its productions favour intimate staging, imaginative costumes and close engagement between performers and audiences rather than large sets and heavy touring equipment.

The company also supports singers, musicians and theatre practitioners at the beginning of their professional careers through its Emerging Artist Programme.

Its new production of *The Marriage of Figaro* marks the directorial debut of international opera singer Danielle de Niese. Orlando Jopling conducts the ten-player Wild Arts Ensemble, with the opera performed in English in a new translation by de Niese and Jopling.

Mozart's comedy follows Figaro and Susanna on the morning of their wedding, when they discover that their employer, Count Almaviva, has designs on the bride-to-be.

A day of disguises, misunderstandings and plotting follows as servants attempt to outwit their master and ensure that the wedding goes ahead. Among the opera's best-known musical moments are its fizzing overture, the Countess's aria "Dove sono" and the jubilant finale.

The cast includes Jack Sandison as Figaro for the Guildford performance, Ellie Neate as Susanna, Timothy Nelson as Count Almaviva and Elinor Rolfe Johnson as Countess Almaviva. Matt Siveter takes over the role of Figaro for the September performances.

They are joined by Abbie Ward as Cherubino, Olivia Ray as Marcellina, Timothy Dawkins as Bartolo and Antonio, William Searle as Don Basilio and Don Curzio, and Eleanor O'Driscoll as Barbarina.

Wild Arts describes the production as an evening of "sparkling tunes, tangled romances and razor-sharp wit", staged with bold costumes, inventive props and an emphasis on pace and storytelling.

The company's second Surrey offering, *An Evening of Opera*, is intended to provide an accessible introduction to the art form as well as an entertaining programme for established opera enthusiasts.

Devised and directed by Guido Martin-Brandis, the semi-staged production follows four singers through a 75-minute story of intrigue, jealousy, comedy and love, accompanied by a string quintet.

The programme brings together music by Handel, Mozart, Puccini, Rossini and other leading opera composers alongside songs by Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, Rodgers and Hammerstein and Noël Coward.

Selections include the Flower Duet from Delibes' *Lakmé*, the overture to Rossini's *William Tell*, "Anything You Can Do" from *Annie Get Your Gun*, "On the Street Where You Live" from *My Fair Lady* and "Make Our Garden Grow" from *Candide*.

The Surrey performances are:

The Marriage of Figaro

Friday 7 August - Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Millbrook, Guildford GU1 3UX

An Evening of Opera

Saturday 5 September - Titsey Place, Oxted, Surrey

The Marriage of Figaro

Sunday 6 September - Titsey Place, Oxted, Surrey

Further information and booking links are available from the Wild Arts website and its dedicated *Marriage of Figaro* page.

Tickets for the Guildford performance are available through the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre.

Lionel Blackman Photo: Marriage of Figaro scene courtesy Wild Arts