



## **New Year Gifts for everyone – with love from Grange Park Opera, Surrey**

*“Bryn's Falstaff is surely now his signature role. It suits both his voice and his temperament. His Fat Knight will be fondly remembered long after he has retired to some mountain fastness in Snowdonia.”* (The Daily Mail)

*“Terfel, who first sang the role in 1999, brings his masterly experience to every gesture, vocally and dramatically.”* (The Observer)

One of the biggest successes of the 2021 Grange Park Opera, Surrey season was Verdi's *Falstaff*, starring Bryn Terfel – and now everyone is going to have a chance to enjoy this landmark performance, for free.

As part of its *12 Days of Christmas* amusements, on the 5<sup>th</sup> Day (30 December) Grange Park Opera is releasing a film of the stage production to watch free, here <https://grangeparkopera.co.uk/whats-on/falstaff/>

As the saying goes, *“Shakespeare invented him, Verdi made him immortal”* – and, surely, it was Bryn Terfel who defined him. Superstar Terfel first sang Falstaff in 1999 and, 22 years later in 2021, he took the role at Grange Park Opera (10 June – 18 July). First shown in the 17th century Farnese theatre in Parma (2011), the production has truly Falstaffian designs including sensational backcloths by Italian master Rinaldo Rinaldi.

Natalya Romaniw, Janis Kelly and Sara Fulgoni are the conniving wives of Windsor in Verdi's only comic opera, written when the composer was 80 – contradicting the adage that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. The opera is a hymn to the irrepressibility of the human spirit.

As Terfel says, *“It's just a joy to portray on the stage, this loveable old rogue who can't help but lie, eat, cheat and drink”*.

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On the 13<sup>th</sup> Day of Christmas (7 January) comes the release of Grange Park Opera's innovative new film of Puccini's only comic opera *Gianni Schicchi* – also free to view for all.

Described as *Dynasty* meets *The Sopranos*, Grange Park Opera's tongue-in-cheek production of Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, moves 13<sup>th</sup>-century Florence to a historic house in Chelsea. It is the 6<sup>th</sup> free-to-see opera film made by Grange Park Opera since the first lockdown.

Grange Park Opera CEO Wasfi Kani CBE says: "*Lockdown taught us a thing or two. Since March 2020 there have been more than 248,000 views of our streamed offerings. With our broadcast stage productions and new opera films, we are giving the world this stupendous art form at no charge. Whether you are in Tierra del Fuego, Toulouse or Tirana – it's yours.*"

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## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Grange Park Opera** was founded in 1998 by Wasfi Kani,CBE. Since then, it has performed to over 300,000 people with more than 75 productions and 450 performances, during the course of 22 festivals. Productions take place at the Theatre in the Woods, a five-tiered, 700-seat opera house on the estate of the 14th century West Horsley Place, which was inherited by Bamber Gascoigne from his aunt, the Duchess of Roxburghe. The £11.5m cost of the building was raised by Kani herself from private donations in just one year.

**Wasfi Kani CBE, CEO Grange Park Opera**, was born in 1956 in Cable Street in London's East End, and is almost certainly the only opera impresario who spent her childhood in a house with an outside lavatory. A violinist, she played for the National Youth Orchestra and went on to study music at St Hilda's College, Oxford. After 10 years in the city, programming and designing financial computer systems, she started a small computer consultancy which gave her the flexibility to spend more time conducting. By 1993, she had made music her full-time career. In 1992, Wasfi was made Chief Executive of Garsington Opera in Oxford. In 1998, Kani founded her own opera company, Grange Park Opera, which in 2016 moved to West Horsley Place. Wasfi Kani is an Honorary Fellow of the RIBA and St Hilda's College, Oxford. In the New Year's Honours 2002, she received an OBE for her work in bringing her second opera company, Pimlico Opera, into prisons. In January 2021, she received a CBE for services to Music.

Images can be found here - <https://grangeparkopera.co.uk/press-media/mediacentre/>

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION & INTERVIEWS**

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