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Press Release: For Immediate Release

Introducing the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival

The Blackwater Valley Opera Festival brings the magic, accessibility, innovation and fun of opera and music to Lismore Castle, and to the historic houses of the Blackwater Valley



Così fan Tutti at Lismore Opera Festival 2016; *L'Elisir d'Amore* at the 2017 Opera

Each summer, opera devotees and music lovers alike flock to the historic, romantic and unforgettable surroundings of Lismore Castle in Co Waterford. They come for a Festival that brings music to beautiful locations, draws people from around the world, and gathers everyone together for dinners, recitals, concerts and, of course, the opera itself.

Founded in 2010, the Lismore Opera Festival has become a key moment in the musical social calendar. Now, as we draw closer to our 10th Anniversary in 2019, the Festival is growing. An additional night of Opera at Lismore Castle has been added and is being hosted to support Enable Ireland. The series of recitals in the Great Houses of the Blackwater Valley has also been expanded. There are also concerts in Lismore's historic Cathedral, and at the romantic Dromore Yard, a restored farm on the banks of the Blackwater River. This means that even more people than ever before will be coming to the Blackwater Valley in Ireland's Ancient East. To mark this development, the Festival is changing its name.

Building on the legacy of the Lismore Opera Festival, we're proud to announce the newly named Blackwater Valley Opera Festival.

At the heart of this year's Festival is Rossini's witty, musically wonderful, and wild *L'Italiana in Algeri*, *The Italian girl in Algiers*. Speaking on his selection for this year, Dieter Kaegi says that he is "pleased to present this masterpiece. It is bright, cheerful and melodious throughout," he adds. "It's really an outrageous comedy!" From the famous overture on, audiences will delight in the twists and turns of the love-plot, and the marvellous music for which Rossini is famed. The Festival is indebted to Lord and Lady Burlington for making the fabulous Lismore Castle available to the Festival's opera lovers. It proves the perfect backdrop.

“Few musical experiences can match or beat the magic of opera,” says Festival Director, Gemma Tipton. “It’s musical magic, pure and simple. And when that opera is being performed by brilliant Irish and international singers, here in the setting of the Castle Yard at Lismore, with dining options in the Castle Gardens beforehand, you have all the ingredients for an unforgettable experience.”

“We are so fortunate in having the brilliant Dieter Kaegi on board,” adds Tipton. “The entire festival programme is focused on providing an Opera experience of the highest quality for the enjoyment of our opera devotees, and a celebration of the joys of music with as many participants and visitors as possible – and having the most fun while doing so.”

The programme of recitals has also grown. Music in the Great Houses of the Blackwater Valley includes events at Cappoquin House, Salterbridge, Tourin and Fort William, as well as St Carthage’s Cathedral, and also in Dromore Yard, right on the river banks. The renowned Swiss cellist, Nadège RoCHAT, will play music by Ina Boyle, recently rediscovered as one of the most important composers in pre-1950s Ireland. The recitals series will also feature award-winning talents from the RDS, Irish Heritage, the Nevill Holt and Garsington Operas, making the Blackwater Valley the place to discover the household names of the future.

Festival Chair, Michael Alen-Buckley says, “New beginnings are always exciting. We decided to rebrand and relaunch to reflect the expanded nature of the festival we all love so much. Dieter, Gemma and I, together with our talented board of directors and advisors, have been working hard to create an engaging programme celebrating musical talent, while giving a platform to emerging stars.

“Our new festival is supported by our principal sponsors: Kildare Village, JLT, and the David Ross Foundation, and our wonderfully committed group of patrons from around the world, all of whom share a common love of music and belief in its power to transform lives.”

“For this reason,” Alen-Buckley adds, “the festival also includes a dedicated education programme, which we’re planning to further develop over the years to come. We believe that the best way to support young Irish talent is to offer performance opportunities alongside noted international professionals,” he says. “And that’s exactly what we’re doing here.”

Notes to editors:

Co-founder of the Lismore Opera Festival, Dieter Kaegi has also worked with Opera Ireland, English National Opera and the Aix-en-Provence Festival. He is currently also the General Manager at TOBS *Theater Orchester Biel Solothurn* in Switzerland.

Performance dates for the 2018 Opera are:

Tuesday 29th May – *L’Italiana in Algeri* Schools’ Night

Wednesday 30th May – *L’Italiana in Algeri* Charity Gala Night, supporting Enable Ireland

Friday 2nd June – *L’Italiana in Algeri* Night at the Opera

Saturday 2nd June – *L’Italiana in Algeri* Finale

Contact: director@blackwatervalleyoperafestival.com

Tickets go on general release on February 28th

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