

Welcome to the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival

The Lismore Opera Festival has grown, with new venues, an extra night of opera at Lismore Castle, pop up restaurants and lots more to discover in the Blackwater Valley. To celebrate, the Festival is also changing its name. Welcome to the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival.



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

Expect strong women, passion, intrigue, romance and beautiful music at the newly-named Blackwater Valley Opera Festival, taking place this summer along the River Blackwater in Co. Waterford.

With opera at Lismore Castle, recitals in St Carthage's Cathedral, the Great Houses of the Blackwater Valley, and Dromore Yard – a romantic 18th century farm – plus pop up restaurants and talks, it truly is Ireland's most beautiful music festival.

Programme Highlights

Programmed by Festival co-founder, Dieter Kaegi, the centre piece opera at Lismore Castle is **Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri / The Italian Girl in Algiers*** – featuring an Irish and international cast, and updated for the 21st century. What's a strong woman to do when faced with pride, possessiveness, jealousy, passion and chicanery? And what if she has also fallen in love? Isabella's solution is both brilliant and musically magical.

Under the baton of Marco Zambelli, and featuring Javier Abreu, Rachel Kelly, Leonardo Galeazzi, Rachel Croash, Rory Musgrave, Sandra Oman and Rory Dunne, with a set by Slawek Narwid, the opera promises to transport you into another world. A special performance on Wednesday May 30th is being held in support of Enable Ireland. May 29th to June 2nd 2018.

Brilliant women are a feature of the programme as **Swiss cellist Nadège Rochat and pianist Dearbhla Collins** play music by recently rediscovered Irish composer Ina Boyle at Dromore Yard on Thursday May 31st.

Rising star **Máire Carroll**, winner of the RDS Collins Memorial Award plays a piano concert at St Carthage's Cathedral on Saturday June 2nd. Including pieces by Cécile Chaminade, the best-selling female composer of her time, as well as two pieces based on Joe Duffy's book *Children of the Rising*, specially written for Carroll by Sebastian Adams, she's a talent to be reckoned with.

Music in evocative settings is a key feature of the Festival, and Kerry-born, award winning **Irish baritone Gavan Ring, accompanied by Denise Crowley**, sings Beethoven and Schumann at Salterbridge House on Saturday June 2nd as part of the series of music in the Great Houses of the Blackwater Valley.

New talent meets with international names as the Blackwater Valley Opera Festival platforms the stars of the future, with Irish Heritage Award winners Adam Heron (piano), Maria McNamee (harp) and Rebecca Murphy (soprano) at Dromore Yard on Friday June 1st. This concert is presented in a double bill with guest singers from the Garsington and Nevill Holt Operas.

Celebrating the **Blackwater Valley** is key, and alongside the diverse and excellent local restaurants, the Festival also hosts **pop up dining adventures**, including Eunice Power's Middle-Eastern inflected Opera Dinner in the Lismore Castle Gardens, ahead of the opera each night. Meanwhile, Dromore Yard hosts both dinner and lunch for concert-goers.

Coming to the festival also gives visitors the chance to explore this very beautiful and historic part of Ireland. Whether you're staying in Castlemartyr Co Cork, Ardmore, Dungarvan or Youghal, you can punctuate your musical moments with incredible walks, delicious food, and truly soak up the atmosphere of Ireland's Ancient East.

Announcing the programme, 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. 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."

Opera tickets from €85, and recital tickets from €10 are on sale now
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