



Aurora Orchestra at Snape Maltings: photo credit Britten Pears Arts

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Britten Pears Arts announces its Spring 2025 activity

Highlights include:

- Aurora Orchestra celebrates its 20th birthday at Snape Maltings
- English Touring Opera presents a new production of Bellini's *The Capulets & The Montagues*
- JS Bach Cantatas at Eastertide with Britten Pears Chamber Choir, The Suffolk Ensemble and conductor Ben Parry
- The Red House, Aldeburgh Exhibition in 2025 is *Spiritual Britten* which explores the spiritual aspects of his life and music
- The Britten Pears Young Artist Programme once again presents the Friday Lunchtime Concert series with outstanding young artists and leading international coaches
- Open Sessions offer a chance to catch a glimpse of musicians developing new work at Snape Maltings
- Family Activity includes Mini Music Makers, Family Music Makers and specially devised family days at both Snape Maltings & The Red House

Spring 2025 at Britten Pears Arts presents a season in which the rising up of creativity mirrors the awakening of nature as winter turns to spring. From Aurora Orchestra's 20th birthday celebrations, a Bellini opera, and the popular Friday Lunchtime Concerts series to family fun at The Red House, seasonal offerings in the Snape Maltings shops and cafés, and the changing light and energy in this most beautiful of natural settings – this is a season of growth, celebration, and discovery through music, arts, and living heritage.

Aurora Orchestra at 20: 9 – 11 May

Britten Pears Arts celebrates 20 years of Aurora's pioneering music-making with this all-star weekend at Snape Maltings. The orchestra traces its early days back to Snape and so there is no better venue in which to mark the anniversary. Aurora is renowned for distinctive performances, playing some of the world's most epic works from memory and being in true connection with the music and with each other. It is a winning combination which leads to exciting, memorable experiences for audiences and performers alike. Over this special weekend, the orchestra is joined by star soloists for a Mahler symphony, presents *Carnival of the Animals* in a typically inventive and imaginative new way, and invites young audiences to get hands-on with music through participatory sessions.

- [Carnival of the Animals](#): Aurora and internationally renowned physical-theatre-makers **Frantic Assembly** present a fantastical reimagining that pairs Saint-Saëns' *The Carnival of the Animals* with a new work that asks: what happens when the carnival is over? The performance opens with a new staging of *The Carnival of the Animals*, played from memory by Aurora Orchestra and directed by **Jane Mitchell** and Frantic Assembly's **Scott Graham**. Saint-Saëns' vibrant introduction to orchestral instruments is infused with movement, design, lighting and new text by **Kate Wakeling**. Richard Ayres' riotous new work *Dr Frompou's Anatomical Study of an Orchestra* then invites us behind the scenes of the Carnival to see what happens to the performers when the show is over. Specially commissioned for this production, the piece introduces us to the madcap scientist Dr Frompou, who keeps the instruments of the orchestra captive in a laboratory, performing sinister musical experiments and finding new ways to make strange and powerful sounds. Find out what happens when the instruments begin to stage a rebellion! Suitable for all ages from 7 upwards (11 May, 5pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Carnival of the Animals Early Years](#): An immersive presentation of Saint-Saëns' work for children aged 0-6 and their families. Little listeners are invited to come and meet the animals and their instruments up close: fly with the flute, play chase with the pianists, stomp with the double bass and float downstream with the soft glides of the cello (10 May, 10.30 & 11.30, Britten Studio).
- [Das Lied von der Erde](#): **Aurora Orchestra** and its Founder and Principal Conductor **Nicholas Collon** are joined by mezzo-soprano **Alice Coote** and tenor **Andrew Staples** to perform Mahler's musical homage to nature and humanity in a chamber-ensemble version arranged by **Iain Farrington**. The programme also features Boulanger's *D'un Matin du Printemps* and Rebel's 1738 depiction of Chaos and the creation: *Les Elements* (10 May, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Pre-Performance talk](#): Join Aurora's Conductor **Nicholas Collon** and flautist and Creative Director **Jane Mitchell** in conversation on the orchestra's 20 years of pioneering distinctive musical projects (10 May, 5.45pm, Britten Studio).
- [Singing Afternoon with John Rutter](#): **John Rutter** welcomes singers of all ages and abilities for a large-scale singing afternoon, staged as part of Aurora Orchestra's 20th-anniversary weekend at Snape Maltings. The repertoire will include music by Rutter and a range of other composers (11 May, 1 – 4pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

English Touring Opera: 29 March

- [English Touring Opera](#) returns to Snape Maltings as part of its spring tour to present Bellini's *The Capulets & The Montagues*. The composer's reworking of Romeo & Juliet tells the tale of two households at war and of two lovers in over their heads, doomed by the conflict between their families. ETO's new production is directed by **Eloise Lally**, who returns to ETO after directing 2023's *Lucrezia Borgia* and is conducted by **Alphonse Cemin** (29 March, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

Easter at Britten Pears Arts

- [Bach Cantatas](#): This concert features choral and orchestral music by JS Bach for Eastertide. Performed by the **Britten Pears Chamber Choir**, outstanding soloists who are alumni of the **Britten Pears Young Artist Programme**, and the **Suffolk Ensemble**, it follows the memorable sold-out Messiah in Snape Maltings Concert Hall performed by artists with Suffolk connections. The two uplifting cantatas, written by Bach for particular Sundays of the church's year, are miniature epics, each telling a part of the Easter story through a combination of arias, choruses, and recitative. They are complemented by two 8-part motets and a rousing orchestral overture. **Ben Parry** conducts and the soloists include alto **Alexandra Meier**, tenor **Thomas Herford** and bass **Francis Brett** ([26 April, 7pm, Blythburgh Church](#) & [27 April, 4pm, St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds](#)).

- [Easter Family Fun at The Red House](#): Interactive Easter storytelling plus themed music and craft activities for children and their families (8 & 9 April, 11am, 12pm, 2pm & 3pm, The Red House).
- [Easter Family Fun at Snape Maltings](#): A special day of engaging Easter-themed family activities including an Easter Trail, art & craft activities, face painting, tastings in the shop and the bustling Farmer's Market – all in the beautiful setting of Snape Maltings (19 April from 10.30am, Snape Maltings).

The Young'uns: 24 May

- 20 years since accidentally discovering folk music in the back room of a Northeast pub, folk favourites [The Young'uns](#) celebrate two decades together and their 40th birthdays at Snape Maltings in partnership with FolkEast. With heart-on-the-sleeve storytelling, beautiful lyrics, warm harmonies and relentless repartee, **Sean Cooney**, **Michael Hughes** and **David Eagle** (the award-winning stand-up comedian) sing life-affirming folk songs for today. The band have three BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards to their name (24 May, 7.30pm, Britten Studio).

Britten Pears Young Artist Programme (BPYAP)

Friday Lunchtime Concerts: January to March

- Every Friday from late January to mid-April, Britten Pears Arts presents twelve Friday Lunchtime Concerts at 12pm. The majority take place in the historic Aldeburgh Jubilee Hall, with one each taking place at Snape Maltings and Orford Church. The series features performances by young ensembles in the 2024-25 Britten Pears Young Artist Programme as part of their residencies in Snape and Aldeburgh.
- Participants include **Trio Bronte** ([31 January](#) & [7 February](#)); **Quantum Clarinet Trio** ([14](#) & [21 February](#)); **Fiora Quartet** ([28 February](#) & [7 March](#)); **De Beauvoir Piano Trio** ([14 March](#)); **Fibonacci Quartet** ([21 March](#)); **Trio Farben** ([11](#) & [18 April](#)).
- [Chamber Music Plus I](#) & [Chamber Music Plus II](#): Five early-career chamber ensembles - **Aventurin Quartet**, **Asaka Quartet**, **Sonas Quartet**, **Trio Kagura** and **Trio Rinaldo** - involved in the BPYAP 12-day Chamber Music Plus course perform works they have been working on with internationally renowned artists including alumna of the Alban Berg Quartet **Isabel Charisius**, leading song and chamber-music pianist **James Baillieu**, BPYAP alumni **The Heath Quartet**, alongside the creators of the groundbreaking Intermission programme violinists **Elena Urioste** and **Melissa White** (29 March & 4 April, Aldeburgh Jubilee Hall).

Artist Development

Open Sessions offer a unique chance to go behind the scenes and experience work-in-progress created during Britten Pears Arts Residencies. The following are taking place from February to May:

- [Naomi Burrell](#): The Laboratory of Lullabies features 'night-time' music and lullabies from mother-and-daughter **Naomi Burrell** (violinist and composer) and **Margareta Burrell** (composer). On their residency they will develop their recorded album into a live show and community workshop, collaborating with an artist to create a visual experience as well as a picture book (8 February, 3pm, Jerwood Kiln Studio).
- [Brighde Chaimbeul and Martin Green](#): A collaboration between **Brighde Chaimbeul** and **Martin Green** centred on the Scottish smallpipes that merges traditional acoustics with electronic systems into a single sonic entity. Brighde Chaimbeul is a leading purveyor of experimental Celtic music and a master of the Scottish smallpipes. Martin Green is a multi-award-winning musician and Ivor Novello winning composer. As a member of Lau, he has won four BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards for Best Group (8 February, 4.30pm, Britten Studio).
- [Hannah Catherine Jones](#): Theremin, waterphone, and voice combine in this exploration of how performers and audiences can be more deeply connected through frequency and vibration. **Hannah Catherine Jones** will use the residency to balance her time between recording and producing versions of some of *The Oweds* – her ongoing body of work – made up of multi-layered, multichannel, audio and audiovisual compositions (2 May, 3pm, Jerwood Kiln Studio).
- [Dickson Mbi](#): A first look at the new work TELLUS from the Olivier Award-winning choreographer and composer, inspired by the courageous women in **Dickson Mbi's** life and the enduring spirit of Mother Earth. TELLUS explores themes of influence, societal roles, and environmental connections, blending his unique choreographic style with his evolving musical compositions. Mbi will collaborate with singer/songwriter **Nicki Wells** and cellist **Gabriella Swallow**, deepening the integration of music and dance, in pursuit of a holistic and

emotionally resonant experience for audiences. Beyond this residency, TELLUS will lead to a captivating new production set to premiere in autumn 2025, followed by an international tour (17 May, 3pm, Britten Studio).

The Red House

- **[Spiritual Britten](#)**: Curated by **Paul Edmondson**, *Spiritual Britten* explores the spiritual aspects of his life and music, looking at the defining moments and works that illustrate his motivations as a composer: his passions and the beliefs that shaped him and the works he created. Sacred music was a constant thread throughout Britten's career. Though not devout, the Christian values and routines of his childhood shaped his approach to God and the music he composed. One of the earliest works he composed was Hymn to the Virgin, written at the age of 17, while his most significant was the War Requiem (3 April – 2 November 2025, The Red House).
- **[Darkness](#)**: An exhibition of the monochromatic works by artists such as David Hockney and Francis Newton Souza collected by Britten and Pears. The two men collected 1,200 plus works of art over their nearly 40 years together. The art collection is rarely seen in its entirety, with only around 5% on display in their home, library and studio (3 April – 2 November, The Red House).
- **[Red House Guided Tours](#)**: Eight-person, 90-minute tour through Britten and Pears' house, studio and library and a visit to the archive. Every Wednesday until 21 May 2025.
- **[Behind the Scenes at The Red House](#)** offers an opportunity to access spaces in Britten and Pears' beloved home that are not usually open to the public (19 & 24 May).
- **[Half Term Nature Sessions](#)**: Half term family art activities inspired by nature (28 & 29 May, 11am, 12pm, 2pm & 3pm, The Red House).

Family Events

- **[Mini Music Makers](#)** is a Friday morning session of fun music and play activities for 0–5-year-olds. Join **Joe Carr** and friends for singing and creative play: great for the little ones to learn social skills, turn-taking, sharing and of course, how to have fun (12 January – 30 May, 10am, Imogen Holst Room, The Red House).
- **[Family Music Makers](#)**: A free workshop of family music-making for children aged 5–10 and their grown-ups, including warm-ups, musical games and creating new music (16 February & 13 April, 2pm, Peter Pears Recital Room).

Full listings online at www.brittenpearsarts.org

Tickets go on sale on **23 November at 10am**.

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Notes to Editors

About Britten Pears Arts

Britten Pears Arts is a pioneering music, arts and heritage charity based on the Suffolk coast at two popular, historic visitor destinations: The Red House and Snape Maltings. Britten Pears Arts emerged from the creative partnership of Benjamin Britten, one of the greatest composers of the 20th century, and his professional and personal partner, singer Peter Pears. Britten and Pears shared a progressive vision for music and the arts to be useful, helping people enhance and bring joy into their lives. Britten and Pears' vision inspires all our activity, from work with the local communities to our national leadership roles in the fields of talent development and music, health and wellbeing.

www.brittenpearsarts.org