

Britten Pears Arts announces its Autumn Winter 2025 season



Highlights include:

- Britten Weekend marks 80 years since the end of the Second World War and the liberation of Auschwitz
- Aurora Orchestra performs Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony from memory and is joined by Chloë Hanslip for Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2
- Christmas at Snape includes a festive programme from John Wilson and Sinfonia of London and the Snowman with Live Orchestra
- Shobana Jeyasingh Dance presents the world premiere of their new Tempest-inspired production *We Caliban*
- Actor James Anthony-Rose brings legendary percussionist James Blades back to the stage in his show recorded for BBC Radio 3
- Britten Pears Chamber Choir led by Ben Vonberg-Clark explore spiritual struggle and mortality through experiences of Nazi oppression in Europe during the 20th century
- Family Concerts feature a double bill screening of Wallace & Gromit with live brass band; Mini Music Makers & Family Music Makers
- Open Sessions offer a chance to catch a glimpse of musicians developing new work at Snape Maltings
- The Red House offers behind the scenes tours, Heritage Open Days, Britten's birthday and more.

This autumn sees Britten Pears Arts present a wide range of activity from the familiar to brand new including leading performers, orchestras and ensembles alongside rising stars, with talks, open sessions and more.

Britten Weekend: 7 – 9 November

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- [Traces of the White Rose](#): Sansara choir tells the powerful story of five students and a professor who stood up to Nazism and paid with their lives. They present a sequence of words and music telling the story of the White Rose resistance. Choral music by British and German composers is interspersed with readings from the letters, diaries and pamphlets of the White Rose in vivid new translations by students from the University of Oxford's White Rose Project. Sansara return following their Residency development within Britten Pears Arts' compassionate Communities Programme (7 November, 7pm, Britten Studio).
- [Study Morning](#): Historian **Dr Lucy Walker** and pianist **Dr Simon Callaghan** reflect on art born from atrocity in a morning of talks, music and reflection to explore musical works created in violent and devastating circumstances, and consider both their context and legacy (8 November, 10.30am, Britten Studio).
- [Stories as Brittle as Glass](#): Tenor **Liam Bonthron** and pianist **Benjamin Mead** (a former Viola Tunnard Scholar at Britten Pears Arts) explore the profound and often uplifting resilience of humanity in times of war. Movements from Britten's "Who are these children?" are interwoven with songs from Cheryl Frances-Hoad's "Magic Lantern Tales", juxtaposing children's nursery rhymes, riddles and nightmares with adult recollections of life in both World Wars. Other popular war settings by Butterworth, Ivor Novello, Debussy, Poulenc and Wolf complete this thought-provoking and varied programme (8 November, 3pm, Britten Studio).

- [English Chamber Orchestra and Raphael Wallfisch](#): Beethoven's spirited Leonore Overture No. 1 sets the stage for Bliss's emotionally rich and rarely performed Cello Concerto, a showcase for **Raphael Wallfisch**'s artistry. Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony is a deeply personal and moving work that reflects the composer's inner world. **The English Chamber Orchestra** is conducted by **Łukasz Borowicz** (8 November, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Red House Recital](#): Cellist **Raphael Wallfisch** and pianist **Dr Simon Callaghan** perform Bridge's Cello Sonata and Britten's Elegy for Solo Cello. Bridge's Cello Sonata, composed during the First World War, embodies his deep despair over the futility of war. Contrasting movements span lyrical passages and intense dissonance, mirroring the emotional turmoil of the time. Britten's Elegy for solo cello, originally written for viola, was composed as a tribute to the memory of Bridge, his teacher. The programme also includes works by Henriëtte Bosmans and John Ireland, offering a poignant reflection on the impact of war and the enduring power of music to express collective memory and resilience (9 November, 12pm & 3pm, The Red House, Aldeburgh).

[Aurora Orchestra: 22 November](#)

- Aurora Orchestra returns to Snape Maltings to perform memorised Mendelssohn, alongside Prokofiev's second concerto with violinist **Chloë Hanslip**.
- Principal Conductor Nicholas Collon conducts and gives a musical introduction to Mendelssohn's "Italian" Symphony before performing the work from memory.
- The programme also features Caroline Shaw's *Entr'acte*; Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No.2, written as he prepared to return to the Soviet Union after years abroad, takes us into darker territory (22 November, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

[Shobana Jeyasingh Dance: We Caliban: 20 September](#)

- **Shobana Jeyasingh Dance** presents the world premiere of its new Tempest-inspired production - *We Caliban* - an inventive, sideways look at Shakespeare's last play, *The Tempest*, written as Europe was taking its first step towards colonialism.
- Jeyasingh's bold and imaginative new work is paired with projections by **Will Duke** and music by **Thierry Pécou**. *We Caliban* is performed by eight of Britain's most talented dancers (20 September, 7pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

[James Blades: Pandemonium of the One Man Band: 11 October](#)

- Acclaimed actor **James Anthony-Rose** brings legendary percussionist James Blades back to the stage in this piece of theatre magic recorded for BBC Radio 3.
- From his obscure beginnings as a circus drummer, and an accompanist to silent movies at the Wisbech Hippodrome, to the international classical concert hall, Blades was a long-term collaborator of Britten.
- Blades habitually toured a percussion-lecture nationwide, and this show presents as one of these. There will be demonstrations of instruments and techniques, and anecdotes and revelations, as James Anthony-Rose tells the story of his remarkable life, together with a celebration of the power and mystery of Blade's extraordinary talent and career.
- Written by **Robin Brooks** and **James Anthony Rose**, directed and produced by **Fiona McAlpine** and music direction by **Tomi Rose** (11 October, 3pm & 7pm, Britten Studio).

[Britten Pears Chamber Choir: 15 & 16 November](#)

- **Britten Pears Chamber Choir** conducted by **Ben Vonberg-Clark** explore a programme centred around spiritual struggle and mortality through experiences of Nazi oppression in Europe during the 20th century in Bury St Edmunds and at Snape Maltings.
- Distler's *Totentanz* weaves together stark, expressive choral interludes with brief spoken texts drawn from Baroque sources. MacMillan's *Miserere*, composed in 2009, is a passionate and searingly beautiful setting of Psalm 51, and draws on the solemn tradition of the Renaissance penitential psalm. Vally Weigl was a Jewish composer and music therapist from Vienna who fled to the United States in 1938, escaping Nazi persecution. These final pieces, written in the later years of her life, are meditative, lyrical and quietly affirming – offering a sense of spiritual resolution. In different ways, all three composers grapple with the existential pressures of their times whether through inner exile, literal exile or sacred expression.
- This programme traces a path from anguish through lamentation to the possibility of peace (15 November, 3pm St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds & Sunday 16 November, 3pm, Britten Studio).

Christmas at Snape Maltings

- [Sinfonia of London](#): John Wilson and Sinfonia of London present a programme of Christmas favourites, featuring two of the country's finest jazz singers **Matthew Ford** and **Clare Teal**, with hits including White Christmas, Let it Snow, Winter Wonderland and Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas (19 December, 7.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Sing Christmas](#): Join conductor **Ben Parry**, the **Britten Pears Chamber Choir** and a four-piece band to sing your heart out with Christmas songs from the past 40 years. No previous singing experience necessary (20 December, 4pm, Britten Studio).
- [The Snowman with Live Orchestra](#): Britten Pears Arts continues what has become a seasonal tradition of a special screening of **Howard Blake's** *The Snowman* with live choir and orchestra – the perfect way for all the family to celebrate the festive season. **Ben Parry** conducts the **Suffolk Ensemble** and a chorus of talented young singers including **Aldeburgh Young Musicians**, **Jubilee Opera**, **Sing Praise and Reverb** (21 December, 12.30pm, 2.30pm & 4.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).
- [Co-op Juniors presents: Magic of Christmas](#): A spectacular new music and dance show bursting with energy and a generous sprinkling of festive magic, from the UK's largest youth musical theatre group celebrating 20 years at Snape Maltings. High energy dance and singing, spectacular visuals and a generous sprinkling of festive magic (5 – 14 December, various times, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

Family Concerts

- Britten Pears Arts present a double-bill of **Wallace and Gromit** with live brass band accompaniment from one of the UK's finest ensembles, **The Fairey Band**. Blast off with a space-themed programme exploring the scale and wonder of the universe including Wallace & Gromit's first ever adventure [Wallace & Gromit's A Grand Day Out](#), (19 October, 2.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall). The Academy Award-winning adventure, [The Wrong Trousers](#), sees the debut of the dastardly penguin Feathers McGraw (19 October, 4.30pm, Snape Maltings Concert Hall). Between the two screenings, the fun continues with free interactive brass demonstrations and hands-on percussion workshops.
- [Mini Music Makers](#) is a Friday morning session of fun music and play activities for 0-5-year-olds. The 90-minute sessions are led by The Red House's Community and Collections Curator **Joe Carr** and include singing and creative play to encourage social skills, turn-taking, sharing and having fun (every Friday to 12 December, The Red House).
- [Family Music Makers](#) is a free, fun session of music and play activities for 5-7-year-olds including warm-ups, musical games and creating new music (27 October, Peter Pears Recital Room, 2pm).

Britten Pears Young Artist Programme

- [Composition, Alternative Performance & Performance Art](#): Eight exceptional young artists present their new ideas developed during their week-long course as part of the Britten Pears Young Artist Programme.
- This open session is the culmination of the Composition, Alternative Performance & Performance Art (CAPPA) course led by composers **Larry Goves** and **Sarah Hennies**. This course is designed to foster conversation and collaboration between likeminded artists who are passionate about creating new and innovative work (19 December, 3pm, Britten Studio).

Open Sessions

- Britten Pears Arts Residencies provide time and space for creators at all stages of their careers to create, be curious and try out new ideas. **Open Sessions** offers a unique chance to experience new work that is being developed collaboratively and authentically in a safe supportive environment.
- [Ana Silvera, Lydia Samuels and Tomer Damsky](#): During their Britten Pears Arts Residency, the trio will embark on a bold new collaboration, drawing on ancient texts and rare recordings from medieval Iberia. Their music reimagines the shared heritage of Sephardic, Arabic, and Ibero-Christian traditions, weaving a rich tapestry of sound that bridges centuries and cultures (2 October, 7pm, Jerwood Kiln Studio, Snape Maltings).
- [Olivia Chaney](#): After a week-long residency, Olivia will share early insights, new interpretations, and live performances that breathe fresh life into Purcell's work, placing it in vibrant conversation with modern songwriting. Expect explorations of folk, pop and contemporary classical interpretations. Whether you're a

classical enthusiast, a folk fan, or simply curious about the creative process, this is a rare chance to witness a unique musical journey in progress (3 October, 7pm, Britten Studio).

- [At the Heart of it All](#): **Hugh Nankivell** and **Wils Wilson** explore music and performance with the very young and very old in their Residency. This intergenerational project places pre- and post-verbal participants at the centre of the creative process. Expect a mix of live performance, puppetry, and film – plus a chance to offer feedback and be part of shaping this bold, inclusive work (25 October, 11am, Jerwood Kiln Studio, Snape Maltings).
- [Alice Boyd](#): Developed during a week-long residency, this Open Session offers a first glimpse into Alice Boyd's new live adaptation of her BBC Radio 4 documentary *Shifting Soundscapes*. Combining Martyn Stewart's archive recordings with her own field audio, Alice performs live using layered vocals, synths, and field recordings to create an evolving soundscape in real time (14 November, 7pm, Jerwood Kiln Studio, Snape Maltings).
- [Iona Lane and Ranjana Ghatak](#): Following their residency week, these two singers will present new music inspired by their deep connections to the landscapes and waters that shape their lives; from the remote Scottish peninsula of Knoydart to the rivers of Bengal and the streets of London. Expect rich harmonies, rhythmic experimentation, and a powerful meeting of cultures through voice, harmonium, and percussion (5 December, 7pm, Jerwood Kiln Studio, Snape Maltings).
- [FOLK LIKE US](#): British-Bolivian theatre artist and choreographer **Jennifer Jackson** shares the first glimpse of her new work which blends dance, live music, folklore, and spectacle with masked dancers, ancestral echoes, a girl with a snare drum, and the pulse of a community in motion. Created in collaboration with composer **Jasmin Kent Rodgman**, this is a ritual of rhythm, awe, and togetherness in a fractured world (6 December, 2pm, Britten Studio).

Participatory Events

- [Scratch Choir: Holst](#): an immersive day for singers of all ages who are comfortable reading music exploring folk-inspired choral music of Imogen and Gustav Holst, under the expert guidance of conductor **Ben Vonberg-Clark** (19 September, 11am, Britten Studio).
- [Scratch Choir: A Ceremony of Carols](#): Led by conductor **Ben Vonberg-Clark**, The Scratch Choir will explore Britten's atmospheric work based on ancient carols, Middle English texts, and timeless chants (26 November, 11am, Snape Maltings Concert Hall).

The Red House

- This year's [Heritage Open Days](#) theme is 'Architecture' fitting for the creative inspiration that surrounded Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears at The Red House. The house itself is a Grade II-listed 17th-century farmhouse. The interior provides an accurate picture of their life together – telling not only their story but also those of the family, friends and famous guests who stayed or visited there. (13 – 21 September, The Red House, free but please book).
- [Heritage Open Days: Imogen Holst's House](#): A special opening of the home of composer, conductor, and educator Imogen Holst which offers a fascinating glimpse into her life and work. This one-bed bungalow is an enchanting capsule of mid-century aesthetic, designed and built by HT 'Jim' Cadbury-Brown (13 - 21 September, 9 Church Walk, Aldeburgh, free but please book).
- [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 29 October.
- [Behind the Scenes Winter Tours](#): A chance to visit The Red House's "closed" season where the focus is on conserving the house and collection. Find out the work involved behind the scenes as well as some gems from the collection. Includes a tour of the house, composition studio and library followed by a talk in the Archive (Every Wednesday from 5 November – 17 December, 11am, The Red House, Aldeburgh).
- [Red House Garden Tours](#): 60-minute tour of the garden through Britten and Pears' eyes led by the horticultural team (23 July, 20 Aug, 3 & 17 Sept, 1, 15 & 29 Oct, 2pm).
- [Spooky Sounds at The Red House](#): This October half-term, hear some Suffolk ghost tales and children will have the opportunity to create their own sound-effect kit and tell their own spooky stories at home (31 October – 1 November, Imogen Holst Room, The Red House, various times).
- **Britten's Birthday**

Thomas Kelly: Pianist Thomas Kelly, Britten Fellow at the Royal College of Music, presents a programme including Britten/Stevenson's evocative Fantasy on Themes from Peter Grimes and Liszt's monumental Sonata in B minor – a pinnacle of Romantic virtuosity (21 November, 11am, The Red House, Aldeburgh).
The Red House Open Day: To celebrate Benjamin Britten's birthday, The Red House and Archive will be open for a special autumn open day and guided tours – plus there will be cake! (22 November, The Red House, 11am – 3pm).

Full listings online at www.brittenpearsarts.org
Images available [here](#).
Tickets go on general sale on 16 August 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