



GARSINGTON OPERA
AT WORMSLEY

GARSINGTON OPERA AND COASTAL CULTURE NETWORK

As a result of **Magna Vitae** and **Garsington Opera for All's** pioneering education and outreach work integrated with free public screenings of opera in isolated coastal and rural communities, a new online network – the **Coastal Culture Network (CCN)** – has been formed. CCN aims to strengthen the network of cultural provision around the coast by bringing together coastal local authorities, cultural organisations, Coastal Community Teams and others with an interest in the role of culture in seaside locations.

Culture and the coast are inextricably linked. Always part of the English seaside attractions, in recent years contemporary arts and culture have helped to reinvigorate many coastal towns following the decline of traditional tourism. The potential of culture to be a key factor for regeneration is now widely acknowledged and the CCN aims to build on this and drive it forward. Projects such as **Opera for All** feed into the process by raising confidence and aspiration and impacting on community cohesion.

Opera for All was set up by Garsington Opera, Magna Vitae and the Coastal Communities Alliance in 2015 after a successful bid made to Arts Council England for funding, which enables a large-scale programme of education and outreach work in isolated and rural coastal communities together with free digital screenings of a performance from Garsington Opera to be run. For a period of three years, this has provided ground-breaking opportunities for communities to be involved in creating, learning about and performing opera.

Projects and free screenings will again take place this year in Skegness, Ramsgate, Highbury/Burnham-on-Sea and Grimsby and over 1000 young people will take part in creative residencies at both primary and secondary schools. For the students in each of the 25 schools, the experience of working alongside a team of professional artists to create and perform their own pieces in relation to the opera that will be screened (*Semele* 2017, *Eugene Onegin* 2016, *Così fan tutte* 2015) is transformative. For many, it is their first experience of live professional singing and it sets confidence and aspirations soaring. The programme challenges expectation by uncovering the ingredients and foundation of opera - drama, music, story-telling and expressive emotion.

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The CCN can be found within the Coastal Communities Alliance website. Members will be able to join an online forum, communicate with other members to build partnerships, and access case studies, information and resources. These functions will go live March 2017.

Nicola Creed, Executive Director Garsington Opera said: *To see the level of engagement with individuals, and the effect that our work can have on children and adults who have had little or no such opportunities before has been heart-warming and we are very proud of the part we are playing in bringing culture to isolated and rural areas.*

Mark Humphreys, Chief Executive, Magna Vitae said:

The team at Magna Vitae are delighted to be driving this innovative new network with our partners at Garsington Opera and the Coastal Communities Alliance and are very grateful to Arts Council England for their support. The Coastal Cultural Network promises to be an exciting development and we look forward to working with many more partners in coastal communities to enable them to experience the benefits of networking in this way.

Laura Dyer Deputy Chief Executive, Arts Council England said: *Around the country it's been great to see our investment in arts and culture enriching life in coastal and seaside towns, both for local residents and holidaymakers. The Coastal Culture Network is a really exciting opportunity to build on this. We hope to see it bringing together new partnerships, as well as encouraging the sharing of best practice, helping to bring great art and culture to more people.*

Matt Warman MP said: *I've seen the positive role that culture can play in the coastal community I represent in Boston & Skegness and am therefore very happy to support the new Coastal Culture Network to help share good practice and promote the benefits of cultural activity in more communities around the coast.*

www.garsingtonopera.org

www.coastalcommunities.co.uk/arts-opera/ccn



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