

RUSTIC: Company to stage another work by Mozart's rival Salieri in Bampton after success of last outing

Head into the garden for world-class opera right on our doorstep

JULY 19th
2019

Nicola Lisle

news@nqo.com

FOR most of us, a night at the opera means expensive seats in the West End, fancy European cities or palatial manor houses.

But admirers of beautiful singing and music can enjoy opera close to home and in much humbler surroundings on Friday and Saturday – in the west Oxfordshire town of Bampton.

Following the success of Salieri's *La Grotta di Trofonio* a couple of years ago, Bampton Classical Opera is once again championing the work of Mozart's great rival with one of his earlier works, *La scuola de' gelosi* (The School of Jealousy), opening in Bampton next weekend.

The opera – which premiered in Venice in 1778 – is a comedy of marital jealousy, infidelity and deception, and is believed to have inspired *Così Fan Tutte*, which it closely resembles.

Two couples – grain merchant Blasio and his wife Ernestina, and the Count and Countess Bandiera – have their marriages put severely to the test, aided by a Lieutenant and two servants, Lumaca and Carlotta.

"People loved *Trofonio* so much we really wanted to do another Salieri, and this seemed the obvious one," said director Jeremy Gray, who founded Bampton Opera with wife Gilly French in 1993.

"In some ways it's not as interesting as *Trofonio* because that was written in the Viennese



GUESTS prepare to enjoy a previous performance of the popular Bampton Classical Opera in the West Oxfordshire village; right, Matthew Sprange plays Blasio

FOR TICKETS
CALL 01993
851142 OR SEE
BAMPTON
OPERA.ORG

style, whereas this is more in the Venetian style.

"But the interesting thing about this is that when it was revived in Vienna in 1783, Salieri rewrote a fair amount of the music and that is much more in the Viennese style. Also, the original libretto by Caterino Mazzola got edited by Da Ponte. So it's a real jigsaw piece."

"It's got some good ensembles," adds music director Anthony Kraus. "There's good music for all

the characters, not just the four principals, so everyone gets a good bite of the cherry."

As with previous Bampton productions, this will be the modern day UK premiere – but not, it turns out, the only production happening this year.

"The funny thing about this is that once we had decided to do it, we discovered everyone else was doing it," Jeremy added.

"It was recorded in Germany and the CD came out last year. There was a production in Florence earlier this year, which Gilly and I

went to see, there's one in Vienna at the moment and there's one in Uruguay, of all places."

Matthew Sprange, who plays Blasio, is making his Bampton debut.

"I love it," he said. "Everybody chips in and says what about this, what about that, and Jeremy chucks away the rubbish and keeps the good stuff. It does feel really collaborative."

Bampton Classical Opera: *The School of Jealousy* is being staged in The Deanery Garden, Bampton, on Friday and Saturday at 7pm.

























