

The heart of opera training in the UK

 NATIONAL
OPERA
STUDIO

Alums

More than 600 singers and répétiteurs have been through the National Opera Studio since 1978. These include:

Alfie Boe OBE
Ivor Bolton
Susan Bullock CBE
Alice Coote OBE
Gerald Finley OC, CBE
Lesley Garrett CBE
David Gowland
Brenda Hurley
Julia Jones
Elizabeth Llewellyn MBE
Steven Naylor
David Butt Philip
Joan Rodgers CBE
Nicky Spence OBE

'My time at the National Opera Studio proved to be an invaluable springboard into the profession. Working directly with pillars of the opera business helped equip me for what was to come'

Nicky Spence OBE, tenor
2009/10 alum



Welcome

What does it take to become a successful opera singer today? A voice, talent, and passion, certainly. But to become truly compelling, an artist must go further – with vision, authenticity and courage. These qualities can't necessarily be taught, but they can be discovered, shaped and elevated. That's where National Opera Studio comes in.

We do more than merely train singers and pianists musically. We stand with you, ready to guide, support, encourage and collaborate. With our collective experience and insight, we encourage you to discover your voice, define your vision and shape the future of opera. We help you find your self-belief on stage, and beyond that, your place within the art form itself.

Our Young Artist Programme offers the most artist-led, personalised and forward-thinking training of its kind. Through our strong relationships with six partner opera companies, singers hone their strengths and test their boundaries with specifically tailored programmes performed with orchestra and piano. Pianists benefit from a comprehensive vocational training to become répétiteurs. For talented younger singers who have faced barriers to training, our Academy offers a vital step on

the way to a career. We also offer practical and specific Short Courses.

We believe that opera is one of the most powerful forms of human expression and that access should never be limited by circumstance. That's why all our training is free. For those on our flagship Young Artist Programme, we go further: we pay our singers, so you can focus fully on your artistry.

In this brochure you can find out more detail about what we do and why we are different from other opera training organisations, as well as details about how to support our work and get in touch. We look forward to hearing from you!

Eric Melear
Artistic Director

Nicholas Simpson
Executive Director

We are unique in having been founded by, and working in partnership with, six of the leading opera companies in the UK:



GLYNDEBOURNE

opera
north



WNO

WELSH
NATIONAL
OPERA
CENTRE
ARTHUR
COE

Who are we?

The National Opera Studio (NOS) is the UK's leading opera training organisation, working in partnership with the country's major opera companies. We nurture exceptional talent through intensive, tailored coaching that prepares singers and répétiteurs for the professional world. Our work combines world-class training with practical experience, giving artists the tools to thrive in a lifetime of opera.

Since our inception, generations of our alums have worked in the world's great houses, but we always look to the future and constantly evolve to the needs of the art form.

Who do we train?

Singers and pianists on the Young Artist Programme come from any background, anywhere in the world. There is no upper age limit, but they are usually in their 20s or 30s. They may have studied at conservatoire or taken another path but, either way, they are passionate about opera and have more to discover about their own capabilities. They're curious, ambitious and open, and want to explore their creative boundaries in a safe, nurturing, but challenging environment.

We also nurture emerging talent through our Academy, a foundational programme for singers aged 19–25 who may have faced barriers, and through Short Courses that offer singers and pianists valuable opportunities to advance their skills and experience.

Our work with local schools aims to identify and support young talent as well as offering our Young Artists the rewarding learning opportunities that working with children and young people can offer.

The Clore Building.
The National Opera
Studio's home based in
Wandsworth, London.



What do we offer?

The National Opera Studio offers world-class training for free to exceptionally talented singers and pianists. Our training provides artists with all the musical, artistic, physical, psychological and practical skills they need to survive in a long, successful career in opera. We offer these through our Young Artist Programme, Academy, Short Courses and our learning and participation work.

Young Artist Programme

Our comprehensive nine-month training programme, delivered in collaboration with the six full-time UK opera companies, is one of the most respected opera training opportunities for singers and répétiteurs in the UK, bridging the gap between higher education and a professional opera career. Training is completely free, and Young Artists receive a monthly performance stipend (currently £1000).

The Academy

Our Academy offers free training to UK-based singers, aged 19-25, with exceptional potential, who may have faced educational, financial, or professional barriers. It provides crucial support as they explore initial pathways in education and professional training. They are offered two immersive training weeks, personalised coaching,

performance skills, branding and CV workshops, and continued support after the course.

Short Courses

The Studio offers an exciting and diverse range of short courses led by its world-class coaches, including vocal coaching, character and text analysis, movement and body language and communicative skills.

Learning and Participation

Our learning and participation work is designed to encourage young people from diverse backgrounds to explore the possibilities and opportunities of a career in opera. While our primary focus is on developing skills in solo dramatic singing, we also emphasise introducing young singers to the world of music theatre. (See pages 12 and 13)



2024/25 alum Ana-Carmen Balestra joins the Orchestra of English National Opera for *Lust and Laughter*, the Studio's opera scenes production in collaboration with Scottish Opera.

Image by Richard Hubert Smith

'With the help of all the in-house and visiting coaches, the working professionals who gave us talks, and all the incredible staff at the Studio, I know I have grown as a person, as an artist, and as a colleague.'

Rachel McLean, soprano
2024/25 alum



Tenor David Butt Philip (2011/12 alum)
leads a masterclass with 2024/25 alum
Rachel McLean.

Image by Julian Guidera

Why are we different?

At the National Opera Studio we always look to the future and remain connected to the profession we serve.

Fully-funded training

Free training, monthly stipends, and bursaries are made possible thanks to support from Arts Council England, our six partner companies, private philanthropy, and various trusts and foundations.

Partnerships

Our partnerships in the opera world offer direct and consistent industry engagement

Artist-led

Singers identify their own training requirements and we strive to fulfil them

Flexibility

We shape each year's training around the needs of the artists

Intensive

We offer an intensive coaching schedule

Artistic identity

We help artists understand what makes them distinctive

Comprehensive support

Our provision goes beyond the stage to cover every area of a singing career

Holistic

Our approach integrates technical, physical, social and psychological aspects of being a musician

Technology

We offer state-of-the-art audio-visual facilities, including high-quality audio, filming and livestreaming and support for online branding

Career portfolio

We help artists develop skills beyond traditional performance, for example in education and outreach work

Follow-up

Our commitment to our alums continues beyond the time of their course

'My time at the National Opera Studio has enabled me to grow immensely as both a musician and an artist. It has been an invaluable period of formative training and professional development, giving me the confidence to throw myself into the working world of opera.'

Adam McDonagh, repetiteur
2024/25 alum

Repetiteur Adam McDonagh
(2024/25 alum) in a coaching
session at the Studio.

Image by Jennifer Hawthorn

Learning and participation

The National Opera Studio is committed to making opera more accessible, inclusive, and relevant through a dynamic programme of learning and participation initiatives. These include workshops, community performances, and collaborative projects designed to reach a wide range of audiences, from school children and community groups to aspiring young musicians.

A key focus is identifying and supporting singers at an earlier stage of their career path to opera, helping them develop the skills and confidence to progress. This work sits alongside our core training offer – the Young Artist Programme, Academy, and Short Courses – creating a clear pathway from early potential to professional readiness.

A core element of this work is our **Knowledge Studio** – an ever-growing digital resource hub offering free access to interviews, masterclasses, and training insights.

In the community

We play an active part in our local community of Wandsworth. We work with local schools and organisations including Wandsworth Music, World Heart Beat Music Academy, and adult learning disability charity One Trust, as well as sharing our knowledge and resources through What Next? Wandsworth. We're a hub venue for the annual Wandsworth Arts Fringe and give free 'Wandsworth Wednesday' recitals every month as well as relaxed performances. We sit on the Wandsworth Town BID Board, take an active role in our local community, and contribute to local business and cultural issues.



Mezzo-soprano Camilla Seale (2023/24 alum) leads a workshop with pupils from Smallwood Primary School, delivered in partnership with Chickenshed Theatre.

Image by Jennifer Hawthorn

Support our work

Sustaining our world-class, fully funded training – and the artistic excellence we strive for – takes more than passion; it takes your support.

With less than a third of our costs covered by core funding, we rely on the generosity of individuals, trusts, and foundations to ensure the Studio can continue offering exceptional training, uphold its commitment to education and diversity, and continue to thrive.

By supporting our work, you join the National Opera Studio family – following our Young Artists as they refine their craft, expand their skills, and prepare for the demands of a professional career.

For further information on donating or becoming a supporter, visit:

nationaloperastudio.org.uk/support-us



Soprano Maureen Braithwaite leads participants in a summer short course.

Image by Craig Fuller

Contact and Location

General enquiries

T: +44 (0) 20 8874 8811

info@nationaloperastudio.org.uk

Audition enquiries

auditions@nationaloperastudio.org.uk

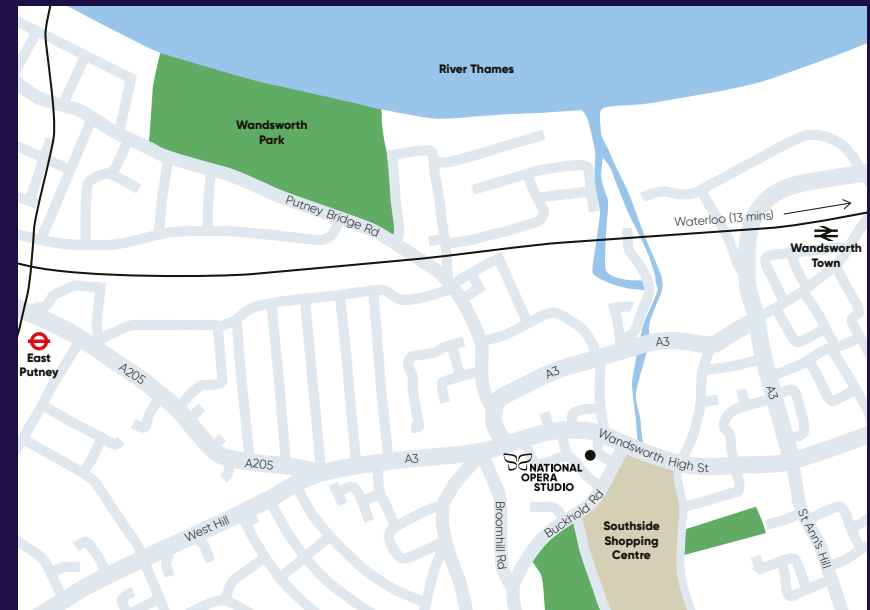
Short course enquiries

shortcourses@nationaloperastudio.org.uk

For all venue hire bookings and enquiries please get in touch:

hires@nationaloperastudio.org.uk

nationaloperastudio.org.uk/venue-hire



Closest stations

- Wandsworth Town 0.6 miles
(10 minutes walk)
- East Putney 0.8 miles
(15 minutes walk)

Buses

37, 39, 145, 170, 220, 270, 337, 485, 670

Waterloo Station is approximately 13 minutes direct from Wandsworth Town station.

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'My time as a young singer at the National Opera Studio was so important because it set me up with a work ethic which I have carried with me throughout my career. We were lucky enough to work with great singers, directors, conductors and coaches and as well as discovering new and exciting repertoire, we learned to perform not only as a soloist but also as part of an ensemble.'

Susan Bullock CBE, soprano
1984/85 alum



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Cover image: Monwabisi Lindi, tenor, 2021/22 alum.
Image by Fiona Hanson