



VERBEIA CONCERT SERIES

THE INAUGURAL CONCERT
OF THE
VERBEIA CONCERT SERIES

STARTING WITH

A French Soirée

MUSIC BY

FAURÉ, RAVEL, POULENC, DEBUSSY
AND OTHERS

HELD IN THE

MAJESTIC 16TH CENTURY TITHE BARN
ON THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE'S ESTATE

AT BOLTON ABBEY



MEZZO SOPRANO

GABRIÈLĖ KUPŠYTĖ



ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
& PIANIST

HENRY WEBSDALE



SOPRANO

ALEXANDRA LOWE

PRE CONCERT DINING

Two Courses

Limited Availability

Booking directly through
the website

CONCERT TICKETS £45

AVAILABLE FROM THE TITHE BARN

[www.crippsandco.com/
the-tithe-barn](http://www.crippsandco.com/the-tithe-barn)



WEDNESDAY 15 JULY 2026

CHAMPAGNE RECEPTION 6.45PM

RECITAL 7.30PM

INTERVAL 8.30PM - OPERA GATEAUX CANAPÉS

By award-winning Patisserie Chef Emma Lawson

PERFORMANCE CONCLUDES 10.00PM

CARRIAGES 10.30PM

FOR FURTHER DETAILS
PLEASE CONTACT:

CAROL DAWSON: CAROLDAWSON26@GMAIL.COM
BOOKING: ENQUIRIES@CRIPPSBOLTONABBAY.COM
TELEPHONE: 01756 631000

What is the Verbeia Concert Series?

The Verbeia Concert Series is a classical music festival based in and around the Wharfe Valley, which aims to establish a thriving concert programme featuring guest artists of the highest international calibre.

Who is involved?

My name is Henry Websdale, I am professional pianist and opera conductor who grew up in Ilkley before training at the University of Cambridge, Royal Academy of Music, Mascarade Opera Studio in Florence and the Georg Solti Accademia in Venice. I have worked in the UK at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and the Glyndebourne Festival, and in Europe at Oper Graz in Austria, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich and now work at the Semper Opera House in Dresden. Before working in opera, I was an organist, and was the organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge whilst studying for my undergraduate degree.

I am very fortunate to rely on the help and knowledge of Carol Dawson, our Concert Manager, who is responsible for the organisation and coordination of our concerts and patrons. She has an impressive record of organising concerts and dinners in the local area, including her recent Opera Gala at the King's Hall in Ilkley and the Last Night of the Proms, held in the private gardens of The Hall, Bolton Abbey, by kind permission of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Many of you may know or have heard of Carol from her highly successful events, often incorporating classical music and fine dining. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact either me or Carol by phone or email.

What is the aim of the VCS?

I was born and raised in Ilkley, and Wharfedale is my family home, but my career as a professional musician has taken me around the world, and I now live in Dresden, Germany. By starting a concert series in Wharfedale, I aim to bring together two strands of my life — professional and familial — by inviting some of the artists I have had the pleasure of working with on the international stage. As most of my work is in the world of opera, vocal music will inevitably form a large part of the series, however, in the first year I have engaged some friends of mine from my time in Cambridge to play purely instrumental music, which I hope will continue to be a part of the concert series. At the heart of our work is a passion for the highest quality of musical performance, but also a focus on the concert as a place to meet likeminded people, exchange thoughts over a drink and to enjoy the beautiful natural surroundings of Wharfedale. We are very fortunate to have many exciting venues in the area, both private and public. Whilst working towards concerts on a larger scale in the future, we would also be very interested in having concerts in smaller, more intimate spaces with limited capacities. Especially for patrons and sponsors, these concerts give us a good opportunity to

get to know those individuals who might be interested in helping us going forward, and provide a close-up experience of musicians playing and singing at the highest level.

How can people get involved?

The cost of engaging international artists is of course very high. This, in conjunction with the costs of hiring venues and other expenses involved with hosting a concert, mean that we will be dependent on a group of private sponsors and donors willing to invest in the artistic and cultural landscape in Wharfedale and further afield. Therefore, the Verbeia Concert Series is now seeking donations to help bring this exciting new programme of concerts to life. For those wishing to offer additional support, patron membership is available for £250 each. By becoming a patron, you will help us establish the series and support its future growth and artistic ambitions. We are also very grateful to those individuals and organisations who are offering their services or properties free of charge or at significantly reduced rates. If you would be interested in hosting a concert, this is also something that we can discuss.

What can patrons and sponsors expect?

We have already organised an event at the Tithe Barn in Bolton Abbey, with two singers who trained in the prestigious Jette Parker Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden singing French song and opera repertoire. A second event will be a private, donors-only event hosted at Broughton Hall, with chamber music in the drawing room, food and wine in the dining room, and the opportunity to stay the night in this house which dates back as far as 1597. This will also be an evening to get to know each other and understand more the aims and direction of the concert series. Our aim is to establish a year round series of concert in venues across the local area.

Why 'Verbeia'?

Verbeia is the name of a Romano-Celtic goddess, thought to be a personification of the River Wharfe. Discovered through a single altar-stone dedicated during the Second Century AD, the engraving of her likeness can still be seen in the Ilkley Manor House, along with the dedication made by the Lingones tribe of soldiers who were occupying the Roman fort at the time. As no other references to Verbeia have been found, the assumption is that she was a local goddess, only worshipped here in the Wharfe Valley.

Henry Websdale

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