Uncovered
Opera
Company

Giuseppe Verdi's
Simon Boccanegra

A concert performance at The Space space.org.uk

Friday 13th November 2026

Starts at 7pm



CAST

Musical Director & Pianist Estelle Shircore Barker

Role		
Simon Boccanegra	Robert Byford	Cover Emil Vincenzi
Paolo	Adam Brown	Cover Thomas Rayner
Pietro	Thomas Rayner	-
Jacopo Fiesco	Ian Wilson-Pope	-
Maria/Amelia	Marrianne Town Smith	Cover Alice Usher
Gabriele	Robin Whitehouse	Cover Simon Ashmead
Un'ancella di Amelia	Megan Artemova-Thomas	Cover Faye Courtney
Un capitano dei balestrieri	Simon Ashmead	Cover David Lowick

CHORUS

Soprano	**Alto**	**Tenor**
Megan Artemova-Thomas	Faye Courtney	David Lowick
Kuan Hon	Dita Gill	Simon Ashmead
Rose Phillips-Fuller	Anna Miell	Pedro Svaetichin
Xilei Liu		Jamie Wing
Lyra Xuejia Ding		
Caitlin Carey		
Lyndsey Gallagher		

Bass

Roger Hutton
Peter Stanford
Alan Mosley

Giuseppe Verdi's Simon Boccanegra – The Story

The opera is set in Genoa at a time when the city was ruled by opposing groups of patricians and plebeians. Against the background of political conflict is the personal enmity between the plebian Simon Boccanegra and the patrician Fiesco. Boccanegra is a famous seafarer who has led successful raids on Genoa's enemies. He accepts the chance to lead the Republic of Genoa with the hope of uniting his family. But on the very day Boccanegra is elected doge, tragedy strikes — his beloved dies, and his infant daughter vanishes. Now, 25 years later, Boccanegra as a seasoned leader is balancing opposing political factions - but as he works to bring stability to a fractured republic, fate gives him one more chance at the family reunion he's longed to secure.

Prologue

In fourteenth-century Genoa, the former corsair Simon Boccanegra is persuaded to stand for election as Doge. He hopes that political power will allow him to marry Maria, the daughter of his bitter enemy Jacopo Fiesco. When Simon learns that Maria has died and that their young daughter has mysteriously disappeared, his personal world collapses. At that very moment, however, he is acclaimed Doge of Genoa, beginning a career shaped by both political power and personal loss.

Act I

Twenty-five years later, Simon is still Doge, while political rivalries continue to divide Genoa. He visits Amelia Grimaldi, who refuses an arranged marriage to his adviser Paolo because she loves Gabriele Adorno. During their conversation, Simon discovers that Amelia is in fact his long-lost daughter, and the two are joyfully reunited after decades apart. Paolo, enraged when Simon blocks the marriage, arranges Amelia's kidnapping, but his plot is exposed. In a powerful council scene, Simon appeals for peace and forces everyone, including the secretly guilty Paolo, to curse the perpetrator of the crime.

Act II

Humiliated and consumed by revenge, Paolo secretly poisons Simon's drinking water. At the same time, Gabriele becomes jealous, mistakenly believing that Simon and Amelia are lovers. While the poisoned Simon sleeps, Gabriele prepares to kill him, but Amelia intervenes. Simon then reveals that Amelia is his daughter, not his lover, and the truth ends Gabriele's suspicions. Gabriele pledges his loyalty to Simon and receives his blessing to marry Amelia, although the effects of Paolo's poison are already beginning to take hold.

Act III

As Genoa celebrates victory over its enemies, Simon is slowly dying from Paolo's poison. Fiesco finally learns that Amelia is his granddaughter, and years of hatred between him and Simon are brought to an end through reconciliation. Surrounded by Amelia and Gabriele, Simon blesses their marriage and names Gabriele as his successor as Doge. After securing both his family's future and Genoa's stability, Simon dies peacefully, mourned by those who once opposed him.

Biographies



Megan Artemova-Thomas has recently completed a Professional Diploma at Trinity Laban, studying with Neil Baker and Panaretos Kyriatzidis, where she performed as Elettra (Idomeneo), Vitellia (La clemenza di Tito), Miss Jessel (The turn of the screw), and Mother (Hansel & Gretel) in a selection of scenes. Recent performances include Domestico/chorus (La Traviata) for St Paul's Opera, Zweite Dame (Die Zauberflöte) for Opera Greenwich, Sandman (Hänsel & Gretel) for Uncovered Opera Company, and chorus in HGO's Off West End award-winning production of Eugene Onegin.



Simon Ashmead is an award-winning British tenor who has performed across the UK and internationally in France, Malta and the Netherlands. He studied at Trinity Laban Conservatoire with Dominic Natoli, where he was the recipient of the Kathleen Creed and Morag Noble Scholarships. Simon's performances range from soloist to choral to the opera stage. His oratorio soloist work includes Evangelist in Bach's St John's Passion, Mendelssohn's Elijah, Bach's and Saint Säens' Christmas Oratorios, Händels Messiah, Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle, and Charpentier's Messe de Minuit. Operatic roles such as Siegfried in Götterdämmerung, Peter Quint in Britten's Turn of the Screw, Victor Frankenstein in the UK Premier of Libby Larsen's Frankenstein, Hoffman in Tales of Hoffman, Tamino in Die Zauberflöte, Bothwell in Mary, Queen of Scots, Bobil in The Snow Maiden, and Abdallo in Nabucco. Simon now regularly sings with professional choirs such as the nico Consort and the newly formed Beati Consort.



Adam Brown is a baritone, originally from Yorkshire, who studied music at Durham University, followed by a masters in voice at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. Recent performances include Figaro, 'The Marriage of Figaro' (Oxford Opera, family matinee performance); The Learned Judge, 'Trial by Jury'; Angelotti/Sciarrone, 'Tosca'; Marcello, 'La boheme'; Edmund Bertram, 'Mansfield Park' (Cardiff Cotswold Opera); Willis, 'Iolanthe' (Twisted Cue); Pietro, 'Simon Boccanegra' (Midsummer Opera); The Traveller, 'Hidden Lovers' (Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival, world premiere); Prestr-Sug/Pish-Tush, 'The Mikado' (Forbear! Theatre). Aside from singing, he is a lapsed trombonist (having decided voice was easier to carry), a sometime opera translator, and likes to dabble in composing, often combining this with his love of Shakespeare: he recently completed his first full-length opera, based on 'Much Ado About Nothing'.



For Uncovered Opera **Robert Byford** performed: Macbeth (title role); Il Frate (Don Carlo) and the covers of Filippo and Rodrigo in Don Carlo, and Nabucco and Zaccaria in Nabucco. Elsewhere recent performances include the title roles in Rigoletto and Nabucco, Di Luna (Trovatore), Renato (Un Ballo in Maschera); Geisterbote (Die Frau ohne Schatten); Nachtwächter (Meistersinger); Stárek/Rychtář (Jenufa); Scarpia (Tosca). He has also covered Fiesco and Paolo (Simon Boccanegra) . Previous roles include Sharpless; Marcello; Belcore, Malatesta and Onegin and Mozart's Figaro, Conte, Guglielmo, Alfonso, Leporello and Papageno; Robert is an accomplished recitalist.



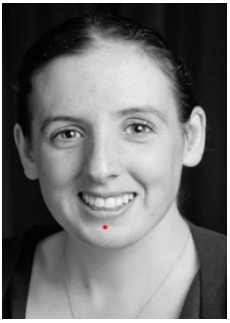
Caitlin Carey (soprano) recently completed her first year of postgraduate vocal studies at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. Her staged opera scene roles include Susanna (Le nozze di Figaro), Sandrina (La finta giardiniera), Stella (A Streetcar Named Desire), Beth (Little Women) and Sister Rose (Dead Man Walking). She has performed as Second Bridesmaid and covered Barbarina (Le nozze di Figaro) for New Aquarian Opera. Also an accomplished pianist, Caitlin received an MMus with distinction in Repetiteur Studies from the Guildhall School's opera course. She studies singing with Marcus van den Akker.



Irish mezzo-soprano **Faye Courtney** read German, Italian and Russian at Royal Holloway University of London and the Friedrich Schiller Universität Jena in Germany. Solo roles include Rose Maybud (Ruddigore), Lucy (Die Dreigroschenoper), Mercédès (Carmen), 3rd solo witch (Macbeth), Suor Dolcina (Suor Angelica), Sister Margaretta (The Sound of Music), 2nd Witch (Dido and Aeneas) and Dritter Edelknabe (Tannhäuser). She has also covered the roles of Mary (Der fliegende Holländer) for Rose Opera, Mamma Lucia (Cavalleria rusticana) for Kentish Opera, Alisa (Lucia di Lammermoor) for Instant Opera and Háta (The Bartered Bride) for Midsummer Opera. Faye is also an organist and cantor at St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Church in Sevenoaks.



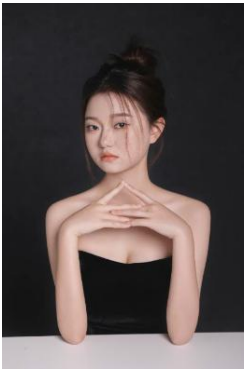
Lyra Xuejia Ding, soprano, is currently studying for a Professional Diploma at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, where she will perform the role of Ciboletta in the Opera Scene production of Johann Strauss II's Eine Nacht in Venedig. She completed an MA in Vocal Studies at the University of York, following undergraduate study at Capital Normal University. During her studies at the University of York, she sang at the York Schools Choral Festival 2025. During her studies at Capital Normal University, she performed widely in Beijing and at university events, and served as the accompanist for a Master's graduation recital. Earlier, as a member and student accompanist with the Golden Sail Choir of the High School Attached to Beijing Jiaotong University, she performed in Perchtoldsdorf and at Vienna City Hall and Palais Augarten.



Lyndsey Gallagher (Soprano) Studied Music at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. Recent Performances include Barbarina in 'The Marriage of Figaro' (Miami Music Festival), A Bridesmaid for 'Trial by Jury' (Garsington Adult Opera Company), performs with Westminster Choir at Princeton University in the summers and also performs regularly with Chelsea Opera Company, last production was Hamlet at Cadogan Hall. Recent Choral opportunities include War Requiem with Regents Opera and Faure's Requiem which was Project led by Gareth Malone. Upcoming productions include chorus for Uncovered Opera for Hansel and Gretel, Chorus in Hansel and Gretel for Rose Opera, Christmas concert with Garsington Adult Opera Company and performing in Chorus for Don Carlo at Cadogan Hall later this month with The Fai Da Te Company.



Roger Hutton has sung chorus and a number of small solo roles, and covered other roles, with Midsummer Opera since 2017. He has also sung with Tea Leaf Opera, performed two solo mini-recitals at Bromley Music Makers, dabbles in composition and is currently undertaking Morley College's Lieder Masterclass with Richard Jackson.

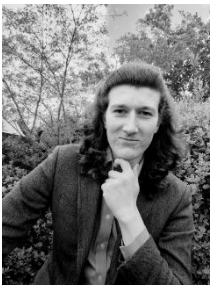


Xilei Liu is a soprano currently studying at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London. She completed her undergraduate studies at Fujian Normal University, China, where she developed her musical and vocal training. During her undergraduate years, she performed as a member of the university choir at the opening ceremony of the National University Students' Choral Arts Festival. In 2025, she took part in Fireflies and Harmonies: Hello World, a charity concert held in Shanghai, China. In December 2023, she was awarded the Gold Prize in the Bel Canto category at the 6th Boao Arts Festival in China. With a strong interest in vocal performance and operatic repertoire, she continues to develop her artistic expression and musical interpretation through her studies and performance experiences.

David Lowick is delighted to be singing with Uncovered Opera again, following Don Carlo last year. Returning to opera a couple of years ago, he sings with Brent Opera, Midsummer Opera, and Opera Integra. Recent roles include Frantz/Pittichinaccio (Hoffmann), Triquet (Onegin), Mercury (Orpheus), part of Danilo (Merry Widow) with Sicario/Araldo (Macbeth) in January. He founded and has run a cappela group Fever Pitch for nearly 30 years, and studies with Arwel Treharne Morgan.



Rose Phillips-Fuller is an American soprano based in Canterbury, Kent. Her recent choral performances include Britten's War Requiem with Regents Opera, conducted by Ben Woodward, and Fauré's Requiem as part of a project led by Gareth Malone. Alongside her musical pursuits, Rose works in the charity sector, supporting vulnerable individuals. She has a passion for the expressive power of music and its ability to connect people and communities. She is delighted to be joining Uncovered Opera's chorus for Verdi's Simon Boccanegra.



Baritone **Thomas Rayner** read Music at Durham University, where he was active as a solo and choral singer; since graduating he has been a student of British soprano Jenny Hill in London. His recent work includes the roles of Doctor Grenvil and the Marquess in La Traviata (St. Paul's Opera). Upcoming work includes Guglielmo in Così fan tutte, in a collaborative production with other emerging artists in Spring 2027.



Peter Stanford bunked off school to sing The Hippopotamus Song ("Mud, Mud, Glorious Mud") for Schools Television, the recording later being published on BBC Records and Tapes and he has not looked back since. He has sung naked on televison with Ed Sheeran, backed Robbie Williams at the London Palladium and was crowned The Smartest Man in the World by Beta Squad. His conducting was applauded by Sir John Rutter. He has sung in over fifty operas, including the British premieres of Kullervo and The Ballad of Baby Doe, and had the role of Bishop Baldwin written for him by Chris Strover in Gawain and the Green Knight. But he is happiest in the chorus, singing more Lords, Soldiers, Fisherman and Peasants than you could shake a stick at. After a road accident, he now walks with a stick which limits his stage roles, but has also, fortunately, relieved audiences of having to watch him dance.



Estelle Shircore Barker is an Australian pianist and music director establishing a reputation for artistic excellence as both a soloist and collaborative musician, performing extensively across Europe, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Recent engagements include the OperAffinity Festival in Todi, Italy, in association with the Aspen Music Festival and National Opera Studio, where she was a Young Artist Pianist. She has served as Young Artist Repetiteur for the Accademia dell'Opera Italiana and Musical Director for the Tait Memorial Foundation's Jewel of the Strand. Estelle was awarded Second Prize at the Sydney International Song Prize and selected as a 2026 SongEasel Young Artist. Following formative studies in Munich, Estelle became a prize-winning graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, before relocating to Madrid to study with Nikolai Demidenko, during which time she also completed a Master of Musical Research. Most recently, Estelle was awarded a Master of Arts with Distinction from the Royal Academy of Music, where she studied under the guidance of Tatiana Sarkissova.



Pedro Svaetichin made his stage début at the age of fifteen as Martin in the Sibelius Academy Operastudio (Helsinki) production of Weber's Ein Opernprobe, appearing alongside Karita Mattila. His voice was early recognised as having the potential of a dramatic tenor. However, Pedro made his début as Ramiro in Rossini's La Cenerentola in 2007, under the patronage of the celebrated Rossini tenor Ugo Benelli, who also directed the production. He completed his training through masterclasses with Edda Moser, Kurt Widmer, Norman Shetler, Gerd Uecker, Siegfried Jerusalem, Alain Billard and Heinz Zednik. He is a graduate of the soloist programme of the Fondazione Toscanini in Parma. His operatic repertoire includes Ramiro, Otello, Don Alvaro, Radamès, Manrico, Alfredo, the Duke, Edgardo, Rodolfo, Mario, Turiddu, Folco (Isabeau) and Canio. He also maintains an extensive recital repertoire, particularly in German Lieder. Pedro has appeared at the Teatro Regio di Parma, Teatro Argentina di Roma, Teatro Bellini di Napoli, Teatro Politeama di Catanzaro, the Festival of Montalto Ligure, the Mozarteum Salzburg, the Alexander Theatre Helsinki (then National Operahouse), Teatro Magnani Fidenza, and most recently at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam.



Lyric-dramatic soprano **Marrianne Town Smith** started to sing in 2007 as a hobby and distraction from a fast-paced marketing management role. In 2015 she successfully auditioned for a Postgraduate Vocal Studies Programme at Trinity Laban and graduated with distinction in 2017. In 2025/26 she has sung the roles of Elisabetta de Valois from the opera "Don Carlo" and Gertrude and The Witch from "Hansel und Gretel"; with her company Uncovered Opera Company which she established in 2021 to bring herself and others performance opportunities. This year she has also covered the role of Amelia in "Simon Boccanegra" with Midsummer Opera and has sung more oratorio works as soprano soloist including Verdi Requiem and Mozart Requiem. Other roles performed and covered since graduation include "Ariadne auf Naxos" Title Role: Abigaille, "Nabucco": Lady Macbeth "Macbeth": Madeleine Lidoine, "Les Dialogues des Carmélites": Maddalena, Andrea Chenier: Donna Anna, Don Giovanni: First Witch "Dido and Aeneas". Lots of further exciting performances are forthcoming - please visit uncoveredoperacompany.com and sign up for more information!



Born in Bath, **Alice Usher** trained at Wales International Academy of Voice and was awarded the prize for the highest mark in the MMus degree at Trinity Laban Conservatoire. She was a choral scholar at the University of Cambridge where she graduated with a BA in English Literature. Alice's roles include La Contessa (Le nozze di Figaro), Rosalinde (Die Fledermaus), Jenůfa, and Micaela (Carmen). In summer 2026 she joined the Grange Park Opera chorus for the world premiere of Krishna by John Tavener. She is the Managing Director and co-founder of award-winning company Gothic Opera, which stages rarely-heard works on gothic and supernatural themes. Roles sung for Gothic Opera include Malwina in Der Vampyr by Marschner and Armgard in Die Rheinnixen by Offenbach, and she is shortly to perform the role of Lizanka in the first production La Dame de Pique (The Queen of Spades) by Halévy since its premiere in 1850, taking place this Halloween at Battersea Arts Centre.



Emil Vincenzi started his musical education within the family at the age of 5 and graduated in guitar at the Conservatory of Brescia (Italy) at the age of 18. He later started in voice training firstly in Verona and then in London with Raymond Connell. He was cast as Gianni Schicchi in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi with Berlin Opera Academy in 2020 (cancelled due to Covid) and graduated in voice from the Conservatory of Verona the same year. In 2021 he made his debut as Nabucco in Verdi's Nabucco in a workshop and appeared as Antonio in Le Nozze di Figaro with Hampstead Garden Opera in November 2021. In 2022 he debuted as Barone Scarpia, Tosca in the school's matinees programme at the Teatro di San Carlo, Naples. In the same year he started a collaboration with Uncovered Opera Company which allowed him to perform as Nabucco (Nabucco), Harlekin (Ariadne auf Naxos) and Macbeth (Macbeth). In 2023 he also debuted as Seid in Verdi's Il Corsaro at Teatro Verdi in Busseto. In 2024 he debuted as Michele in Il Tabarro with Instant Opera. In 2025 he debuted as Rodrigo in Don Carlo with Uncovered Opera. In 2026 he won the 3rd Prize and Prize of the Critics at the International Singing Competition of Lonato del Garda (Italy), and he was Germont in La Traviata with St Paul's Opera. His future performances will be Simone (cover in Simon Boccanegra) and Ezio (Attila) with Uncovered Opera.



Robin Whitehouse was educated at Reigate Grammar School, then spent a year at the Royal College of Music before reading Maths at St Peter's College Oxford. Whilst at university, he played as principal horn with the university orchestras (including performing Bach's Brandenburg Concerto no.1 and Strauss' 2nd horn concerto) and sang with all the major choirs, appearing regularly as a soloist. Since then, he has appeared in numerous operas, including Cosi fan Tutte, Don Giovanni, Die Zauberflöte, La Traviata, Tosca, Carmen, La Cenerentola, Die ägyptische Helena, La Forza del Destino and The Midsummer Marriage. Oratorio work has included Evangelist in both Bach Passions, Haydn's Creation, Handel's Messiah, Mendelssohn's Elijah and Lobgesang, Britten's Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Nocturne & St Nicolas, Elgar's The Dream of Gerontius and Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde. In 2014, he was invited to take part in a public masterclass with the University Orchestra on Mahler's orchestral lieder, taken by Ian Bostridge. Robin currently studies with Neil Baker in London.



Ian Wilson-Pope (Bass-baritone): Born in Roehampton, Ian studied at Trinity College of Music with John Wakefield. Now officially retired from professional stage performances, Ian is happy performing in concert versions of Verdi operas. During his 20 year career, he performed over 50 operatic roles, the most recent including: Paolo Simon Boccanegra (Midsummer Opera); Grand Inquisitor Don Carlo (Uncovered Opera); Wanderer Siegfried; Sarastro The Magic Flute; Voice of Neptune Idomeneo; Hermann Ortel Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg; Dikoj Kat'a Kabanova; Dansker/1 st Mate Billy Budd; Bertrand Tchaikovsky's Iolanta; Il Frate Don Carlo; Jim Hobson Peter Grimes; Masetto Don Giovanni; Lodovico/Montano/Araldo in Otello; Wotan, Fasolt and Donner Das Rheingold; Wotan Die Walküre; Marcello La Bohème; Narbal Les Troyens; Goryanchikov Janaček's From the House of the Dead; Leporello Don Giovanni; Mr Basil The Barber of Seville; Ford Falstaff. He appeared as Leporello in the Guy Ritchie movie Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows in 2011. He is delighted to sing Fiesco in the performance of Simon Boccanegra.



Jamie Wing began his singing journey in 2024, joining the chorus of Godalming Operatic Society's production of Gilbert and Sullivan's Patience. Initially attracted as much by the post-rehearsal pub trips as by the music itself, he soon caught the performing bug. Since then, he has enjoyed exploring the wider operatic repertoire and is delighted to be performing Verdi with Uncovered Opera. In March 2027, he will take on the role of Dr Daly in Gilbert and Sullivan's The Sorcerer with Windsor & Eton Opera.

With thanks to **Dita Gill, Kuan Hon, Anna Miell & Alan Mosley** for also joining our performance.

Donations and Thanks

Our appreciation and thanks go to Steve Brosnan, Rob Byford, Sue Watson, David Roblou, Anna Miell, and all others who donate to Uncovered Opera Company.

Thank you to all our singers and to the pianists this evening and to The Space for hosting our performance, it has been wonderful working with you!

And finally, and big big thank you to our audience, thank you so much for coming to see our show!

Uncovered Opera Company

BEHIND THE SCENES – UNCOVERED OPERA COMPANY



Meet the 3-woman team behind Uncovered Opera Company! Marrianne Town Smith - Company Founder and Director, Rachel Carter- CRM Manager and Production Assistant and Sam Edmonds - Company Manager and Administrator. Working together in our spare time, we organise Uncovered Opera Company performances and thrive on bringing recitals and productions to you, our audience!

Our mission

Cover singers devote vast amounts of time learning and preparing roles in opera but rarely have the chance to perform. Let's celebrate those unseen singers who cover roles and give them a platform to be seen: or at least to work on a role and add it to their CV. Let's uncover as many developing singers as possible. Let's bring opportunities to people not heard by larger companies. Let's acknowledge there are not enough opportunities for developing artists and let's do something about it. Let's come together in a fun, encouraging environment. Let's learn, build our skills, work out how to hold our shit together as opera singers and grow as artists.

Unlike some other developing artist programmes or amateur opera companies there is no fee charged to take part and until funding is secured there is no fee paid to participate. We are a group of likeminded singers, working as part of an equal team, people who actively enjoy learning from each other and want to learn on the job.

For news about forthcoming recitals and future productions please sign up to uncoveredoperacompany.com and register your email address.

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ATTILA

Uncovered Opera Company



Two concert performances

THE SPACE – tickets from space.org.uk

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Sunday 7th February 2027@5pm