

The cast of *What Dreams May Come* (2025).  
Credit: Richard Hubert Smith

**ENGLISH  
TOURING  
OPERA** Opera  
that *moves*



**English Touring Opera  
Trustee Recruitment Pack**

# Welcome from Leonora Thomson, Chair of the Board of Trustees

Welcome and thank you for your interest in English Touring Opera. I am thrilled to be recruiting new trustees for English Touring Opera's Board. Robin Norton Hale (General Director) and I started in our roles at approximately the same time in 2022. There has been a lot of change, not only with new leadership of the Board and Executive, but also with the organisation's move to our new base in Sheffield. All of this has been exciting and has brought with it many new opportunities for English Touring Opera which we are just beginning to explore. With the combination of this and exciting artistic work on the stage, in schools and in communities around the country, we feel strongly that great times lie ahead.

The Board of Trustees are hoping to connect with people who represent many points of view, stories and lived experiences. We are looking forward to hearing about you and about how you can support, challenge and inspire our company.

If you are interested in joining our Board to be part of leading this exciting journey, do read on! We look forward to meeting you.



Samantha Price (Romeo) and Jessica Cale (Giulietta) in *The Capulets and The Montagues* (2025).  
Credit: Richard Hubert Smith



# About English Touring Opera

For over 40 years, English Touring Opera (ETO) has held a unique place in the opera industry as the only mid-scale touring company offering regional venues and thousands of audience members outstanding live productions and impactful learning and participation projects, with the largest geographical reach of any UK company, from Devon to Durham and Canterbury to Chester.

At the heart of our ethos is making exceptional artistic experiences available and accessible to everyone, through a commitment to touring ambitious programmes of high-quality, innovative opera productions that engage and inspire over 33,000 people every year. Central to ETO's programming is our award-winning Learning and Participation Programme, which annually works with over 8,000 children and adults nationwide in schools, workshops, and community projects.

With accessibility, participation, and co-creation at its heart, ETO's diverse programme of work enables people of all ages and abilities to create, participate in, and experience transformative opera performances. ETO provides the only opportunity for many schools to benefit from rich opera experiences, providing the greatest breadth and reach of any UK opera company in this arena.

We have recently opened our Spring season to four and five star reviews and the productions of Bellini's *The Capulets and the Montagues* and *What Dreams May Come* (by composers from Purcell to the present day) are currently touring the country, alongside our opera for Key Stage 2 audiences, *The Vanishing Forest*.

In Autumn 2025 we will tour new productions of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love* and Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, alongside a new production for learning disabled audiences, *Little Terror*. We work with and through numerous other artforms alongside opera; this summer we are shooting a short film of a new opera commission *The Knot* by Kemal Yusuf and Amanda Wilkin in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, and we are in talks with Sheffield Museums about a visual art commission which we will tour in Spring 2026, alongside productions of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* and *Ada and the Code Crusaders*, a new opera for schools and families about mathematician Ada Lovelace.

## Context

A registered charity (no. 279354) with a turnover of around £3.8m in 2023/24, ETO is funded by a combination of Arts Council England (ACE) investment, ticket sales, fundraising from individuals, trusts and foundations and other income streams. In October 2022 ETO was accepted onto ACE's Transfer Programme, providing two-year funding to organisations willing to relocate outside of London.



We moved to Sheffield in October 2024 and have been thrilled with the welcome we have received there. We are aiming to embed ourselves into the local community and the arts ecology of the wider area. Our medium-term aim is to rehearse and open our opera productions in Sheffield, continuing, of course, to tour all over the country, including to Hackney Empire in London where we currently open our seasons. At the moment we are retaining a small London office as our productions for 2025 were already booked into London rehearsal spaces before our move to Sheffield was finalised, and the staff team currently work between Sheffield and London.

There will be significant opportunities and challenges in the years ahead for us, some facing the cultural sector as a whole and some unique to us, and it is in that context that English Touring Opera are seeking exceptional candidates to join the board of Trustees.

The trustees play a key role in the development of English Touring Opera's future strategy, as we approach the formal presentation of that strategy to our principal funder, Arts Council England, to inform funding agreements in the next round of National Portfolio funding.

The cast of *The Vanishing Forest* (2025).  
Credit: Julian Guidera



# Who we are looking for

We are looking for at least two new trustees, who we hope will be based in Sheffield or slightly further afield in the North of England. We are particularly searching for:

- An accountant or someone with significant finance skills
- A professional creative who has worked in the opera world
- An educationalist

We are trying to build as diverse a board as possible and would particularly welcome applicants from backgrounds underrepresented at board level in the opera sector, including individuals from the global majority, those who identify as disabled or neurodivergent, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and those under 35 who represent the above skills and experience.

## The role

### Key responsibilities

- To play a key role in the development of English Touring Opera's vision for the future, contributing to our strategic leadership and robust management
- To understand the legal and financial responsibilities of board members
- To monitor our progress against our funding agreement with Arts Council England carefully
- To provide critical oversight of the practical and financial implications of the artistic programme
- To act as a positive and enthusiastic ambassador for the organisation, advocating on our behalf, and representing its mission
- To proactively support our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- To support fundraising in many forms, which could include attending fundraising events, introductions to potential supporters (individuals, corporate partners or trusts) or a personal donation within your means
- To support, and in some cases lead, relationships with key stakeholders and partners and build networks on behalf of the company.
- To attend board meetings and an away-day each year, take part in sub-committees as appropriate and attend opening nights and/or performances on tour

### Person specification

You will be a dynamic advocate for English Touring Opera and will bring all or most of the following:

- A love of opera
- A demonstrable commitment to diversity and inclusivity
- The ability to be an effective communicator and ambassador

- A knowledge and understanding of what it means to be a charity trustee (training will be given to those who have not been on a board of trustees before)
- Experience on boards or committees, or working closely with boards in an executive capacity
- Well-networked and willing to use professional and personal contacts for the benefit of ETO
- Support of ETO's vision and values

Tamsanqa Tylor Lamani and Emily Hodkinson in *What Dreams May Come* (2025).  
Credit: Richard Hubert Smith





# Trustees and Committee Structure

## Our Trustees are:

Leonora Thomson (Chair)

Bill Bush (Deputy Chair)

Jane Davies

David Ereira

Darren Joyce

Abigail Kelly

Laura Liede

Clarissa Meek

Trevor Moross

Peter Puskas

Madeleine Tattersall

## Board meetings

There are generally five a year, either in Sheffield or London. Meetings can be attended remotely, although we really encourage board members to attend in person whenever possible. Expenses to attend meetings can be paid.

ETO's Committee Structure underpins the work of the Board of Trustees.

- Finance Committee (Chair, Laura Liede): This committee has governance responsibility for all matters relating to finance, HR, audit and compliance.
- Nominations Committee (Chair, Leo Thomson): This committee identifies skills and experience needed at Board level, leads on Trustee recruitment and discusses governance issues.
- Inclusivity and Relevance Committee (Chair, Darren Joyce): This committee has responsibility for social justice matters including diversity, equity and inclusion.

## Terms of engagement

Initially you will be appointed for a three-year term, and trustees can be re-appointed up to a maximum of six years (longer in special circumstances). The board usually meets five times a year with one away day, and sub-committees each meet between board meetings. The position is unremunerated but expenses to attend board and subcommittee meetings can be paid.

# To apply

Please send a CV (two pages maximum) and a one-page supporting letter to [sonia.grande@etopera.org.uk](mailto:sonia.grande@etopera.org.uk). If you would like to send a video application (3 minutes maximum) rather than a supporting letter please feel free to do so.

Closing date for applications: Monday 12 May

Interviews will take place: Thursday 22 May

We hope that new trustees will be able to join us as observers at our next board meeting on 18 June, and as full board members at our away day on 9 July.

**Once again, thank you so much for your interest in this role.**

## **General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR)**

You may be familiar with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018.

The data you provide as part of your application will be held securely – in accordance with GDPR - and accessible only to those involved in the recruitment process. It will not be used for any other purpose.

Once the recruitment process is over, should you be unsuccessful your data will be stored for a maximum of 12 months, then destroyed. If you are appointed, your application form will be retained and form the basis of your personnel record. By applying, you give your consent to your data being stored and processed in this way.

If you complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring form and include it with your application, you consent to the information you provide in it being stored anonymously and processed exclusively for the purposes of Equal Opportunities monitoring. ETO's full privacy notice can be found on its website here:

<http://englishtouringopera.org.uk/site/privacy-policy/>