



PRESS RELEASE

5 April 2017

OPERA ON STAGE, ON DECK AND UNDER CANVAS: SCOTTISH OPERA ANNOUNCES 2017/18 SEASON

- **New productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Greek* and *Pagliacci (The Clowns)***
- **Sir David McVicar's production of Verdi's *La traviata* opens the Season**
- **Scottish Opera's first production of Jonathan Dove's *Flight***
- **World premiere of *BambinO*, an opera for babies by Scottish Opera Composer in Residence, Liam Paterson, directed by Phelim McDermott: at Manchester International Festival, Edinburgh Festival Fringe and in Glasgow**
- **Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* at 2017 Edinburgh International Festival and in Glasgow next year**
- **Four concerts featuring rarely-performed Russian operas in The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert, curated by Music Director Stuart Stratford, including the Scottish premiere of Rachmaninov's *Francesca da Rimini***
- **Pop-up Opera takes to the waves on Scotland's first floating opera house**

Scottish Opera has unveiled its 2017/18 Season which includes a world premiere, a Scottish premiere, four new productions and appearances at the Edinburgh International Festival, Manchester International Festival and Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

A truly international line-up of singers appears throughout the Season with Gulnara Shafigullina, Anush Hovhannisyanyan, Peter Gijsbertsen, Victoria Simmonds, James Laing,

Mardi Byers, Kor-Jan Dusseljee, Emily Edmonds, Susan Bullock, Allison Cook and Jamie MacDougall making their Scottish Opera debuts. There are also welcome return visits from the great British baritone Sir Thomas Allen, Stephen Gadd, Stephanie Corley, Natalya Romaniw, Peter Auty, Samuel Dale Johnson, Graeme Broadbent and Marie McLaughlin, and from former Scottish Opera Emerging Artists Jennifer France, shortlisted in the Young Singer category of the 2017 International Opera Awards, and Sioned Gwen Davies, who represents Wales at this year's Cardiff Singer of the World competition.

Alex Reedijk, General Director, said: 'Our 2017/18 Season has a wonderful breadth of repertoire from the contemporary to the classical. We are thrilled to be returning to the Edinburgh International Festival with Turnage's *Greek*, as well as performing *Bambino* at both the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Manchester International Festival. With visits to 48 venues across Scotland, ranging from performances specially created for babies to those living with dementia, there is, quite literally, something for everyone. The input and creativity of our Music Director, Stuart Stratford, is also evident as we build on the success of The Sunday Series, which this Season focuses on Russian composers.'

Stuart Stratford, Music Director, added: 'As well as presenting an exciting Russian repertoire including *Eugene Onegin*, directed by Oliver Mears, and The Sunday Series, in which audiences can hear lesser-known and rarely-performed works, I am particularly excited about the site-specific performances of *Pagliacci (The Clowns)* next year. A theatre isn't necessarily always the best place to see an opera, so using a very different venue for this production will make the audience experience even more visceral and immediate – it's a real thrill to stand right beside a singer and hear them perform.'

Season 2017/18 Productions

Opening the new Season in October is Verdi's *La traviata*, set in Paris during the 1880s. This revival of the 2008 production by **Sir David McVicar**, who wowed audiences and critics alike earlier this year with *Pelléas and Mélisande*, is conducted by **David Parry** (*Carmen* 2016). The role of Violetta is shared by Russian-Dutch soprano **Gulnara Shafigullina**, who recently sang the role at St Petersburg's Mariinsky Theatre, and **Anush Hovhannisyan**, who represents Armenia at this year's Cardiff Singer of the World competition. Dutch tenor **Peter Gijbbertsen** is Alfredo, British baritone **Stephen Gadd** is Giorgio and three of Scottish Opera's Emerging Artists 2017/18, **Laura Zigmantaite**, **Alex Otterburn** and **Catherine Backhouse**, also take leading roles. The performance on 28 November will coincide with the 150th anniversary of the opening of Theatre Royal Glasgow. There will also be two Dementia

Friendly performances of *La traviata* in Glasgow and Edinburgh, for people living with dementia and their carers.

Jonathan Dove's hugely popular modern opera *Flight* - inspired by the true story of a refugee stranded at an airport - receives its Scottish professional premiere in February 2018. Director Stephen Barlow and his creative team reimagine their production, which originated at Investec Opera Holland Park, for the Scottish stage. Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts a superb ensemble cast including **Jennifer France** (*Ariodante* 2016), **Victoria Simmonds** and **James Laing**, all reprising their highly-praised roles in the Opera Holland Park production, alongside **Stephanie Corley** (*Inés de Castro* 2015), **Graeme Broadbent** and **Marie McLaughlin** (*The Marriage of Figaro* 2016), and former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Sioned Gwen Davies** (*The Mikado* 2016). Dunard Fund supports this production.

Ariadne auf Naxos, by Richard Strauss, is designed and directed by **Antony McDonald**, last at Scottish Opera in 2016 with his five-star staging of *Rusalka*. A new co-production with Investec Opera Holland Park, supported by The Scottish Opera Syndicate, this playful opera is conducted by **Brad Cohen**, Music Director of Western Australia Opera. The international cast includes American soprano **Mardi Byers**, making her first appearance in the UK, Dutch tenor **Kor-Jan Dusseljee**, and Jette Parker Young Artist **Emily Edmonds**. Legendary British baritone and Scottish Opera Music Advisor **Sir Thomas Allen**, who directed 2016's *The Marriage of Figaro*, is the Music Master and Scottish tenor and BBC broadcaster **Jamie MacDougall** is the Dancing Master. Following performances in Scotland, *Ariadne auf Naxos* will be presented at Investec Opera Holland Park in Summer 2018.

A new production of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* is directed by **Oliver Mears** (who recently took up post as Director of Opera at Royal Opera House), with **Stuart Stratford** conducting. This great masterpiece of Russian repertoire, based on Pushkin's classic novel, has not been performed on Scottish Opera's main stage since 1993. **Samuel Dale Johnson** (*The Marriage of Figaro* 2016) takes the title role and **Natayla Romaniw** (*Rusalka* 2016) is Tatyana. They are joined by **Peter Auty** (*L'amico Fritz* 2016) and **Sioned Gwen Davies**. *Eugene Onegin* is supported by The Alexander Gibson Circle.

The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert

Building on its success in the 2016/17 Season, The Sunday Series takes as its inspiration the new production of *Eugene Onegin* and **Stuart Stratford's** love for, and expertise in, Russian music, focusing on rarely-performed operas from Russia. Featuring The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and a fabulous line-up of guest soloists, the Series includes three concerts at Theatre Royal Glasgow and one at City Halls.

The Series opens in October at Theatre Royal Glasgow with a performance of Tchaikovsky's last opera *Iolanta* conducted by **Stuart Stratford**. Originally premiered alongside *The Nutcracker*, it is rarely heard outside Russia. Stuart also takes the baton for the closing concert of the Series which features two operas by Rachmaninov – the first-ever performances of the composer's work on the Scottish Opera stage. Adapted from a poem by Pushkin, *Aleko* was Rachmaninov's first opera. It is paired with the Scottish premiere of *Francesca da Rimini*, which draws its plot from Dante's *Inferno*.

December's concert sees Scottish Opera collaborating with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in a performance of Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*. Conducted by **Mikhail Agrest**, resident for many years at the Mariinsky Theatre in St Petersburg, the performing forces include Masters students from the Alexander Gibson Opera School and student instrumentalists from the Royal Conservatoire performing alongside professional soloists and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

Scottish Opera hosts a week-long residency for students of the London-based National Opera Studio, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this Season. It culminates with February's *From Russia with Love*, a semi-staged performance of Russian-themed repertoire, conducted by **Stuart Stratford**.

Edinburgh International Festival

Scottish Opera and Opera Ventures, a new charity founded by John Berry CBE to commission and produce opera and mixed media performances, are working together on a new co-production of Mark-Anthony Turnage's anarchic opera, *Greek*. This modern retelling of the Oedipus myth, based on the play by Steven Berkoff, is directed by Young Vic Artistic Associate **Joe Hill-Gibbins** and will premiere at the opening weekend of the 2017 Edinburgh International Festival as part of its 70th anniversary celebrations, with further performances in Glasgow in February 2018. The cast of *Greek* includes British singers **Susan Bullock**, **Allison Cook**, **Andrew Shore** (*The Mikado* 2016) and **Alex Otterburn**, winner of an International Opera Award bursary and a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2017/18.

Pagliacci (The Clowns) – community opera in a 'circus' tent

Amateur singers and circus performers have the chance to take part in an exciting new production of *Pagliacci (The Clowns)* by Ruggero Leoncavallo in Summer 2018. **Bill Bankes-Jones**, founder of *Tête à Tête* opera company, directs a company of nearly 200,

including The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, international soloists, a professional and community chorus and both professional and amateur circus performers in this 'blood and guts' tale about a wretched clown. Specially created to be staged outwith Scottish Opera's usual theatre venues in a 'circus' tent, this landmark new production is conducted by Music Director **Stuart Stratford**. Recruitment for participants in the production is underway – full details will be available at Scottish Opera's website.

BambinO – a new opera for babies

Scottish Opera Composer in Residence **Liam Paterson's** *BambinO*, an opera for babies, has its world premiere at Manchester International Festival this Summer. A new co-commission and co-production between Scottish Opera, Manchester International Festival and Improbable, this pioneering piece of music theatre is aimed at infants aged 6 to 18 months. Directed by Improbable's **Phelim McDermott**, babies are free to explore and interact with the singers, musicians and each other during the performance. The production will also be presented at Edinburgh Academy during the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August 2017 and at Scottish Opera's Production Studios in Glasgow in the Autumn. *BambinO* is supported by Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle and Scottish Opera's Education Angels.

Opera Highlights

The ever-popular Opera Highlights tour visits even more venues around Scotland this Season, stretching from Stranraer to Shetland, with dates in both Autumn and Spring. Scottish Opera Emerging Artists and recent graduates of the National Opera Studio are amongst the casts that will take to the road with former Emerging Artist **Jack Furness** directing. These performances are supported by the Friends of Scottish Opera.

Pop-up Opera on land and sea

Pop-up Opera takes both to the road – in Scottish Opera's specially-adapted, fully accessible trailer at festivals and events around Scotland – and to the waves in Scotland's first floating opera house, the converted pilot cutter *Murray McDavid* kindly provided by Murray McDavid Scotch Whisky. The public performances on and from the *Murray McDavid* will be complemented with special shows for schools in marinas down the Clyde, enabling Scottish Opera to extend its reach into communities it has not previously visited.

Pop-up audiences can catch three shows this year; *A Little Bit of La bohème*, *A Little Bit of The Pirates of Penzance* and *A Little Bit of Bubble McBea*, for kids aged three to seven.

Each performance is 25 minutes long and brought to life by a cast of narrators, singers and instrumentalists.

Insights into opera

Opera Unwrapped performances offer a one-hour opera taster, ideal for anyone curious to learn more about the art form, how a show is created or some backstage secrets. There are Unwrapped performances for the productions of *La traviata*, *Flight*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Eugene Onegin*. Audiences can also find out more about the opera they are seeing in pre-show talks. People with a visual impairment can enjoy the full opera experience at audio-described performances, where a live commentary describes the action on stage without compromising the music.

Emerging Artists

The Scottish Opera Emerging Artists programme, which offers young talent a period of full-time work with the Company to help launch their careers, will this Season include mezzo-sopranos **Catherine Backhouse** and **Laura Zigamantaite**, baritone **Alex Otterburn** and repetiteur **Patrick Milne**, with the names of a costume trainee and composer in residence to be announced. Emerging Artists perform in a number of this Season's productions and tours, and in recitals at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and The University of Glasgow. The Emerging Artists are supported by Scottish Opera's Emerging Artist Benefactors and a number of foundations.

Scottish Opera Education and Outreach

Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2018, Scottish Opera's youth company, Connect, will perform three world premieres as part of the Scottish Government's Year of Young People 2018. Created by the winners of the Company's *Opera Sparks* competition, which sought out Scotland's finest young opera creators, the three new works are *Then to the elements* by **Lewis Murphy** and **Laura Attridge**, **Matthew Whiteside** and **Helene Grøn's** *Little Black Lies* and *Maud* by **Henry McPherson**. The Connect Company is conducted by **Chris Gray** in performances in April 2018, and directed by **Olivia Fuchs** (*Inés de Castro* 2015).

Dementia Friendly

Following the performances of *The Marriage of Figaro* (2016) and *La bohème* (2017), there will be two Dementia Friendly performances of *La traviata* in Glasgow and Edinburgh. This fully-staged, shortened version of the show features narrator **Allan Dunn**, The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and a cast of singers. Lighting levels in the auditorium are adjusted and

audiences are able to come in and out of the auditorium or watch in the bar on TV screens if they prefer.

Memory Spinners, the group for people living with dementia and their carers that helps them relax and get creative using music, storytelling, movement and the visual arts, continues to meet weekly in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Schools

2018's Primary Schools Tour, for children in primary five to seven, features a new work: *The Dragon of the Western Seas* is an exciting story inspired by the voyages of Admiral Zheng He, the 14th century leader of a vast fleet of ships which set out from China to Indonesia and beyond.

For children in primary three, The Opera Factory invites audiences on a whirlwind musical adventure to find out how opera is made. **Allan Dunn** is the presenter, and there are online resources available for teachers designed to reinforce key learning outcomes. The Primary Schools Tour and The Opera Factory are supported by Scottish Opera's Education Angels.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editors

Further information on the Season can be found at www.scottishopera.org.uk (from 5 April).

Tickets on public sale from all venues on 1 May (Season subscriptions on sale 10 April).

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. It was founded by Alexander Gibson in 1962 and was inaugurated with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the King's Theatre in Glasgow.

Notable achievements include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Inés de Castro* at the 1996 Edinburgh International Festival and complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production.

Recent commissions include *The 8th Door* (2017), *Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland* (2008-10); *The Lady from the Sea*, *Clemency*, the double bill of *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost*

Patrol (winner of a South Bank Sky Arts Award) which premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival and 2016's *The Devil Inside* by Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh.

Scottish Opera is committed to bringing the widest possible range of opera, performed to the highest possible standards, to the maximum audience throughout Scotland and the UK. Each year it performs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness, as well as smaller theatres, village halls and community centres throughout the country.

Scottish Opera's Education and Outreach Department was the first of its kind of any opera company in Europe. It operates an extensive programme which involves over 8,000 primary school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and *Unwrapped* taster sessions.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



Performances

La traviata

Theatre Royal Glasgow

19, 25, 28 Oct | 28, 30 Nov | 2 Dec 7.15pm

22 Oct 3pm

Dementia Friendly performance 24 Oct, 3pm

His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen

2, 4 Nov 7.15pm

Eden Court, Inverness

7, 9, 11 Nov 7.15pm

Festival Theatre Edinburgh

15, 21, 23, 25 Nov 7.15pm

19 Nov 3pm

Dementia Friendly performance 17 Nov, 3pm

Flight

Theatre Royal Glasgow

17, 21, 24 Feb 7.15pm

Festival Theatre Edinburgh

1, 3 Mar 7.15pm

Ariadne auf Naxos

Theatre Royal Glasgow

22, 24, 28 Mar 7.15pm

Festival Theatre Edinburgh

5, 7 April 7.15pm

Eugene Onegin

Theatre Royal Glasgow

27 Apr, 3, 5 May 7.15pm

29 Apr 3pm

His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen

10, 12 May 7.15pm

Eden Court, Inverness

15, 17, 19 May 7.15pm

Festival Theatre Edinburgh

23, 26, 29, 31 May 7.15pm

Greek

Festival Theatre Edinburgh

Part of Edinburgh International Festival

5 Aug 7.15pm

6 Aug 5pm

Theatre Royal Glasgow

2, 3 Feb 7.15pm

Pagliacci (The Clowns)

June 2018 – dates to be announced

The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert

Iolanta

Theatre Royal Glasgow 29 Oct 3pm

The Fiery Angel

City Halls Glasgow 3 Dec 3pm

From Russia with Love

Theatre Royal Glasgow 25 Feb 3pm

Aleko and Francesca da Rimini

Theatre Royal Glasgow 6 May 3pm

Opera Highlights

Autumn 2017

21 Sep to 28 Oct | Touring to Musselburgh, Markinch, Arisaig, Portree, Stornoway, Lochinver, Carrbridge, Findhorn, Cove, Peebles, Stranraer, Campbeltown, Bowmore, Benderloch, Langholm, Greenock & East Kilbride

Spring 2018

6 Feb to 10 Mar | Touring to Livingston, Hawick, Callander, Midmar, Halkirk, Kirkwall, Tain, Braemar, Montrose, Lerwick, Castle Douglas, Ballachulish, Pitlochry & Rutherglen

Bambino

Pavilion Theatre, Manchester

Part of the Manchester International Festival

4 Jul 1.30pm (Preview)

5 Jul 10.30am and 1.30pm

(Further venues around Greater Manchester, 6 to 16 Jul, excl. Mon 10 Jul)

Edinburgh Academy

Part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe

8 to 20 Aug (excl. Mon 14 Aug)

10am & 11.30am

Scottish Opera Production Studios, Glasgow

21 Oct to 5 Nov (excl. Mon & Tue)

10am & 11.30am

Opera Sparks

14, 15 Apr 2018

Pop-up Opera

24 May to 1 Jul | Tour includes Perth Arts Festival, Mount Stuart Isle of Bute, Prestwick, Girvan, Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival, Riverside Museum Glasgow, Rhu Marina, James Watt Marina Greenock, Port Bannatyne Marina, Portavadie, Troon Yacht Haven, Clyde Marina Ardrossan, Largs Yacht Haven, Theatre Mòdo Peterhead, Pollok House Glasgow & Haddington Show

Emerging Artists Recitals

Fri 8 Dec, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Thu 11 Jan, University of Glasgow Concert Hall

Opera Unwrapped

***La traviata* Unwrapped**

Glasgow Thu 26 Oct 6pm
Aberdeen Fri 3 Nov 6pm
Inverness Fri 10 Nov 6pm
Edinburgh Thu 16 Nov 6pm

***Flight* Unwrapped**

Glasgow Mon 19 Feb 6pm
Edinburgh Fri 2 Mar 6pm

***Ariadne auf Naxos* Unwrapped**

Glasgow Mon 26 Mar 6pm
Edinburgh Fri 6 Apr 6pm

***Eugene Onegin* Unwrapped**

Glasgow Wed 2 May 6pm
Aberdeen Fri 11 May 6pm
Inverness Fri 18 May 6pm
Edinburgh Thu 24 May 6pm

Pre-show talks

La traviata

Glasgow Sat 28 Oct 6pm
Aberdeen Sat 4 Nov 6pm
Inverness Sat 11 Nov 6pm
Edinburgh Sat 25 Nov 6pm

Flight

Glasgow Sat 24 Feb 6pm
Edinburgh Sat 3 Mar 6pm

Ariadne auf Naxos

Glasgow Sat 24 Mar 6pm
Edinburgh Sat 7 Apr 6pm

Eugene Onegin

Glasgow Sat 5 May 6pm
Aberdeen Sat 12 May 6pm
Inverness Sat 19 May 6pm
Edinburgh Sat 26 May 6pm

Audio-described performances

Greek

Edinburgh Sun 6 Aug 5pm (Touch Tour 3.45pm)

Glasgow Sat 3 Feb 7.15pm

La traviata

Glasgow Sat 28 Oct 7.15pm

Aberdeen Sat 4 Nov 7.15pm

Inverness Sat 11 Nov 7.15pm

Edinburgh Sun 19 Nov 3pm

Flight

Glasgow Sat 24 Feb 7.15pm

Edinburgh Sat 3 Mar 7.15pm

Ariadne auf Naxos

Glasgow Wed 28 Mar 7.15pm

Edinburgh Sat 7 Apr 7.15pm

Eugene Onegin

Glasgow Sat 5 May 7.15pm

Aberdeen Sat 12 May 7.15pm

Inverness Sat 19 May 7.15pm

Edinburgh Thu 31 May 7.15pm

Touch Tours start at 6pm for evening performances and 1.45pm for matinees.

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