



PRESS RELEASE

27 March 2019

EUROPEAN PREMIERE OF MISSY MAZZOLI'S *BREAKING THE WAVES* AT EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

- Co presented by Opera Ventures, Scottish Opera and Edinburgh International Festival, following the critically acclaimed production of *Greek* in 2017
- A co-production by Opera Ventures, Scottish Opera and Houston Grand Opera, in association with Bristol Old Vic

The European premiere of Missy Mazzoli's dark and daring opera, *Breaking the Waves*, takes place at this summer's Edinburgh International Festival.

It opens on August 21 at King's Theatre, Edinburgh, for three performances. Based on Lars von Trier's award-winning film, *Breaking the Waves* is directed by **Tom Morris**, the Tony Award-winning Artistic Director of Bristol Old Vic whose work includes *War Horse*, *Touching the Void* and *The Death of Klinghoffer* at ENO and the Met.

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts Soloists of The Orchestra of Scottish Opera. American soprano **Sydney Mancasola**, a grand finals winner of the 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, is Bess McNeill, a young woman living in a deeply religious community in the Scottish Highlands in the 1970s.

Also in the cast are Edinburgh-born baritone **Duncan Rock** as Bess's husband Jan Nyman; **Wallis Giunta**, winner of the 2018 International Opera Awards' Young Singer of the Year; **Orla Boylan**; former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Elgan Llŷr Thomas** (*Ariadne auf Naxos* 2017); **Byron Jackson** and **Freddie Tong**. The libretto is by **Royce Vavrek** and the set and costume designer is **Soutra Gilmour**.

Breaking the Waves caused a sensation when it premiered at Opera Philadelphia in 2016, and went on to win the 2017 Best New Opera from the Music Critics Association of North America and was shortlisted for an International Opera Award.

Alex Reedijk, Scottish Opera General Director said: '*Breaking the Waves* is our second co-production with Opera Ventures for the Edinburgh International Festival, following the critical success of *Greek* in 2017. Missy Mazzoli is one of America's finest contemporary composers, and we are so excited to be part of the journey for her incredible work's European premiere, with the very talented Tom Morris directing and our own brilliant Music Director Stuart Stratford conducting.'

John Berry, Artistic Director and Founder of Opera Ventures said: 'Opera Ventures' first project, *Greek* by Mark-Anthony Turnage, made a huge impact in Scotland and New York City, and we are delighted to follow this with *Breaking the Waves* by one of the most theatrical operatic voices of her generation, Missy Mazzoli. This new production shows the significant value of international collaboration and philanthropic support in bringing contemporary opera to a wider audience. I am very pleased to be working again with director Tom Morris.'

This production has been made possible with support from Howard and Sarah Solomon Foundation, Denise Coates Foundation, Karl Sydow, Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle, The Aaron Copland Fund for Music and a syndicate of donors.

Cast List

Bess McNeill	Sydney Mancasola
Jan Nyman	Duncan Rock
Dodo McNeill	Wallis Giunta
Mother	Orla Boylan
Dr Richardson	Elgan Llŷr Thomas
Terry	Byron Jackson
Councilman	Freddie Tong

Creative Team

Conductor	Stuart Stratford
Director	Tom Morris
Designer	Soutra Gilmour
Lighting Designer	Richard Howell
Projection Designer	Will Duke
Sound Designer	Jon Nicholls
Associate Director and Movement	Sara Brodie
Libretto	Royce Vavrek

Performance Diary

King's Theatre Edinburgh (Part of the Edinburgh International Festival)

21, 23, 24 Aug 7.15pm

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Scottish Opera

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; complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production; and the Achievement in Opera Award at the 2017 UK Theatre Awards for Sir David McVicar's production of Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. Recent commissions include *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, 2019's *Anthropocene* 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 program which involves over 9,000 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.

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Opera Ventures

Opera Ventures is a transformational charity founded by John Berry CBE to develop major new opera and mixed-media projects in partnership with arts organisations worldwide.

Creating and staging new productions of contemporary opera is one of the biggest challenges in the performing arts today, especially in an environment where reduced public funding has forced opera houses and festivals to do less and take fewer risks.

Opera Ventures has been set up specifically to respond to this challenge. With its own combination of artistic vision, producing expertise and a focused network of philanthropists Opera Ventures creates powerful new productions which can be shared by several partners. Thereby harnessing and coordinating the existing infrastructures of internationally recognised organisations.

www.operaventures.org

For Opera Ventures:

Artistic Director: John Berry CBE

Executive Director/Producer: Loretta Tomasi OBE

Edinburgh International Festival

Edinburgh International Festival is an unparalleled, city-wide, celebration of the performing arts for three weeks each August in Scotland's capital. Created in 1947 to celebrate the human spirit and bring people together through art, the International Festival remains dedicated to creative excellence and as a point of annual cultural exchange for a global audience exceeding 400,000 per year.

Committed to virtuosity and innovation, the International Festival presents some of the finest performers and ensembles from the worlds of dance, opera, music and theatre. It also connects with local artists and communities through a range of programmes year-round. The current Festival is curated by Festival Director Fergus Linehan and takes place from 2-26 August 2019. www.eif.co.uk

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