

26 November 2019

SCOTTISH OPERA PREMIERE OF JOHN ADAMS' ICONIC *NIXON IN CHINA* TAKES PLACE IN FEBRUARY AT THEATRE ROYAL GLASGOW

The Scottish Opera premiere of John Adams' *Nixon in China* takes place on February 18. Following three performances at Theatre Royal Glasgow, this new co-production with The Royal Danish Theatre and Teatro Real Madrid transfers to Festival Theatre Edinburgh for two further dates.

John Fulljames, Director of Opera at The Royal Danish Theatre, directs an exciting cast including **Eric Greene** as Richard Nixon, **Julia Sporsén** (*Ariadne auf Naxos* 2018) as Pat Nixon, **Mark Le Brocq** (*Anthropocene* 2019) as Mao Tse-tung, and **Hye-Youn Lee** (*La bohème* 2017) as Madame Mao. The conductor is **Joana Carneiro**, Principal Conductor of the Orquestra Sinfonica Portuguesa at Teatro Sao Carlos in Lisbon. Designs are by **Dick Bird**, who last worked with Scottish Opera on *The Mikado* in 2016.

Adams' work, a collaboration with poet and librettist **Alice Goodman** and theatre director Peter Sellars, is inspired by Nixon's much-publicised 1972 visit to China, the first time an American president had journeyed there. Hailed as the pioneer of a new kind of 'docu-opera', in his eclectic score Adams' mixes a huge range of sounds from pre-recorded electronics to live passages echoing Wagner and Johann Strauss, alongside jazz references and big band sounds that evoke the 1930s of Nixon's youth. Featuring fascinating archive footage from the Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum and The Richard Nixon Foundation, the opera, which premiered in 1987, is as much about the private moments as the public during the historic trip. It explores the experience of the wives as well as the husbands, and memory versus fact.

Director **John Fulljames** said: '*Nixon in China* is a classic opera; Nixon is a hero of Verdian complexity and Madame Mao's vocal fireworks ranks alongside those of the Queen of the Night. This is a spell-bending

score which established John Adams' as one of the great twentieth century opera composers and put American opera on a world stage. Although the events of President Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to Chairman Mao in China have passed into history, this tale of the staging of global politics at the birth of the live media age feels more potent than ever. With a cast led by Eric Greene as President Nixon, and Julia Sporsén as Pat Nixon we have a great team to stage this myth about the ultimate powerlessness of the most powerful people in the world.'

Those who wish to discover more about how the production was created can attend *Nixon in China* Unwrapped, one-hour tasters delving further into the show, as well as Pre-show Talks. Audience members with a visual impairment can enjoy the full opera experience at audio-described performances, which have a live commentary describing the action on stage without compromising the music.

All five performances of *Nixon in China* are proudly supported by Dunard Fund.

Cast List

Richard Nixon	Eric Greene
Mao Tse-tung	Mark Le Brocq
Chou En-lai	Nicholas Lester
Pat Nixon	Julia Sporsén
Henry Kissinger	David Stout
Chiang Ch'ing (Madame Mao)	Hye-Youn Lee
First Secretary to Mao	Louise Callinan
Second Secretary to Mao	Sioned Gwen Davies
Third Secretary to Mao	Emma Carrington

Creative Team

Composer	John Adams
Libretto	Alice Goodman
Conductor	Joana Carneiro
Director	John Fulljames
Set & Costume Designer	Dick Bird
Lighting Designer	Ellen Ruge
Projection Designer	Will Duke
Sound Designer	Cameron Crosby
Original Choreographer	John Ross
Revival Choreographer	Nathan Johnston
Associate Projection Designer	Hayley Egan

Performance Diary

Theatre Royal Glasgow, 282 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 3QA

Tue 18 Feb, 7.15pm

Thu 20 Feb, 7.15pm

Sat 22 Feb, 7.15pm

Nixon in China Unwrapped

Fri 21 Feb, 6pm

Nixon in China Pre-show Talk

Sat 22 Feb, 6pm

Nixon in China Touch Tour

Sat 22 Feb, 6pm

Nixon in China Audio-described performance

Sat 22 Feb, 7.15pm

Festival Theatre, 13–29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT

Thu 27 Feb, 7.15pm

Sat 29 Feb, 7.15pm

Nixon in China Unwrapped

Fri 28 Feb, 6pm

Nixon in China Pre-show Talk

Sat 29 Feb, 6pm

Nixon in China Touch Tour

Sat 29 Feb, 6pm

Nixon in China Audio-described performance

Sat 29 Feb, 7.15pm

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Notes to Editors

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. In 1974 Scottish Opera purchased the Theatre Royal Glasgow,

which reopened in 1975 as Scotland's first national opera house. The Orchestra of Scottish Opera was founded in 1980.

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*; and a Herald Angel for the European premiere of Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival.

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* (premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival), 2016's *The Devil Inside*, with which Scottish Opera made its North American debut in Toronto, and 2019's *Anthropocene*. *Ghost Patrol* won a South Bank Sky Arts Award, and *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* were nominated for an Olivier Award. Last year the company made its US debut with *Bambino* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and returned to the city's Brooklyn Academy of Music with Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* in December.

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 and dozens of other theatres, village halls and community centres. It also operates an extensive programme of outreach and education work 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 receives core funding from the Scottish Government, as well as income from box office, and private and commercial support.



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