



**PRESS RELEASE**

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28 November 2019

## **SCOTTISH OPERA AND DISNEY MUSICALS IN SCHOOLS JOIN FORCES**

Scottish Opera and Disney Musicals in Schools are collaborating for the first time to give five primary schools in Scotland the opportunity to learn and produce their own Disney KIDS musical including *The Lion King KIDS*, *Aladdin KIDS* and *The Jungle Book KIDS*. The pupils will then perform two special shows in their schools and at Theatre Royal Glasgow.

Following a selection process by Scottish Opera, the schools initially chosen to take part in the free, three-year Disney Musicals in Schools programme are Lawthorn Primary School in Irvine, Todholm Primary School in Paisley, East Pleun Primary School in Stirling, Langlee Primary School in Galashiels and St Anthony's Primary School in Johnstone. This is the first time the programme has taken place in Scotland, and five new schools will be chosen to take part in 2020, and another five the year after.

This collaboration between Scottish Opera and Disney Musicals in Schools coincides with the return of Disney's *The Lion King*, which is set to open its run at the Edinburgh Playhouse in December.

The Primary 7 pupils from the five selected schools this month start working with two music and drama artists from Scottish Opera's Outreach and Education Department, who will run step-by-step workshops covering every aspect of casting, rehearsing, staging and performing a 30-minute long version of one of Disney's musicals.

Disney Musicals in Schools features Disney KIDS musicals, which are shorter stage adaptations of classic Disney stories written expressly for primary school performers. The programme aims to build skills and confidence in both pupils and teachers, encourage participation and collaboration, and leave a sustainable

arts legacy for years to come, especially in schools that are actively seeking greater engagement with the arts.

Over a 17-week period, the Scottish Opera teaching artists guide pupils through music and movement, and work with staff to give them experience in singing, stage directing, choreography and stage management. In addition, there are visits from set and costume design specialists to help staff create the costumes and props required for the performance. The schools are also provided with a Disney Show Kit including scripts, director's guide, music score, choreography DVD, and rehearsal and accompaniment CDs.

Disney Musicals in Schools was first launched ten years ago as an outreach initiative designed to develop theatre programmes in New York Elementary Schools, and then in London in 2016.

**Jane Davidson**, Head of Outreach and Education at Scottish Opera said: 'SOE is delighted to be Disney Musicals in Schools' very first Scottish partner in the delivery of Year 1 of a three year in-depth, skill building programme for schools. This unique programme is designed not only to introduce teachers to the key elements involved in preparing their pupils to stage one of Disney's classical musicals but also, through interaction with parents and families, to help establish the role of the arts as a valuable tool in consolidating the school at the heart of the community it serves. Both organisations are firm advocates of the power of the arts to support integrated learning; to enhance attainment levels and to build a child's capacity to achieve their potential and we hope that access to the extensive learning and teaching resources we have to offer, will help them to support their pupils even more effectively in the future.'

**Nancy Shakerley**, Education and Outreach Manager, Disney Theatrical Productions commented: 'We are delighted to join forces with Scottish Opera to bring Disney Musicals in Schools to Scotland. Creativity is at the heart of everything we do, and we are committed to helping young people, their teachers and their schools access the arts. Schools play a vital role in igniting the spark of creativity in their young people and it is our aim that initiatives like Disney Musicals in Schools inspire not only the next generation of theatregoers but theatre makers on and off stage.'

**Jacqueline McBurnie**, Head Teacher at St Anthony's Primary School in Johnstone added: 'We are delighted to be part of this exciting project. It will allow our children to have an experience that would have been beyond their wildest dreams. What makes it even more fantastic is that it will be happening at a time when the school will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. What a way to celebrate as a community!'

-ENDS-

[www.scottishopera.org.uk](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk)

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## Scottish Opera biography

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.

## About Disney Theatrical Productions

DISNEY THEATRICAL PRODUCTIONS, a division of The Walt Disney Studios, was formed in 1994 and operates under the direction of Thomas Schumacher. Worldwide, its 10 Broadway titles have been seen by nearly 200 million theatergoers and have been nominated for 60 Tony® Awards, winning Broadway's highest honor 20 times. With 20 productions currently produced or licensed, a Disney musical is being performed professionally somewhere on the planet virtually every hour of the day.

The company's inaugural production, *Beauty and the Beast*, opened in 1994. It played a remarkable 13 year run on Broadway and has been produced in 37 countries worldwide.

In November 1997, Disney opened *The Lion King*, which received six 1998 Tony Awards including Best Musical. After 22 landmark years on Broadway, it has welcomed more than 100 million visitors worldwide to date, and can currently be seen in nine productions worldwide. Having played 20 countries on every continent except Antarctica, *The Lion King's* worldwide gross exceeds that of any film, Broadway show or other entertainment title in box office history.

Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida* opened on Broadway next, winning four 2000 Tony Awards. It was followed by *Mary Poppins*, a co-production with Cameron Mackintosh, which opened in London in 2004 and went on to enjoy a six year Tony-winning Broadway run.

*Tarzan*®, which opened on Broadway in 2006, went on to become an international hit with an award-winning production enjoying a 10-year run in Germany. In January 2008, *The Little Mermaid* opened on Broadway and was the #1-selling new musical of that year.

Disney Theatrical Productions opened two critically acclaimed productions on Broadway in 2012, receiving seven Tony Awards between them: *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *Newsies*, each of which enjoyed a two-year run with the latter launching a two-year North American tour and a record-breaking Fathom Events' in-cinema release.

*Aladdin*, Disney Theatrical's 2014 hit, continues selling out on Broadway and has launched five additional productions around the globe and has been seen by more than 10 million guests. Its newest hit, the 2018 Tony-nominated Best Musical *Frozen*, continues setting records in its Broadway run with future productions set to open in Australia, Japan, London, Germany and on tour across North America.

Other successful stage ventures have included the Olivier-nominated London hit *Shakespeare in Love*, stage productions of Disney's *High School Musical*, *Der Glöckner Von Notre Dame* in Berlin, and *King David* in concert. DTP has collaborated with the nation's preeminent theatres to develop new stage musicals including *The Jungle Book*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Freaky Friday* and in August *Hercules*.

As a part of the recent acquisition of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox, DTP also heads the Buena Vista Theatrical banner which licenses Fox titles for stage adaptations including *Anastasia*; *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*; *Mrs. Doubtfire* and *The Devil Wears Prada*.

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