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##### Press Release

13 August 2021

**SCOTTISH OPERA ANNOUNCES**

**EMERGING ARTISTS FOR 2021/22 SEASON**

Scottish Opera welcomes a talented group of Emerging Artists for its 2021/22 Season, with soprano **Catriona Hewitson** returning,alongside two new singers, mezzo-soprano **Lea Shaw** and tenor **Glen Cunningham**, while **Toby Hession** continues as the Emerging Artist repetiteur.

As live performance begins to return to theatres, the Company is thrilled to once again be able to offer a group of young artists a period of full-time work at the beginning of their careers. The Emerging Artists will have opportunities to perform with Scottish Opera in live productions throughout the year, as well as work in-house with Scottish Opera staff and visiting coaches to develop their skills.

Their first performance this year will be at Edinburgh International Festival in a Masterclass with **Thomas Quasthoff.** In October and November Glen and Lea will perform in *Opera Highlights*, travelling to local venues across Scotland including in Greenock, Musselburgh, St Andrews, Ballachullish, Strathpeffer, Stornoway, Peebles, Ayr and Dunoon. Meanwhile Catriona will perform in a live performance of *Cosi fan tutte* at Lammermuir Festival and Perth Concert Hall*,* which was originally created as part of the Scottish Opera:On Screen collection, she will later perform in *The Gondoliers and Utopia, Limited* at Theatre Royal Glasgow, Edinburgh Festival Theatre, Eden Court Inverness and London’s Hackney Empire.

Scottish soprano **Catriona Hewitson returns** for a second year following a successful season with the Company in 2021, including performances in the Scottish Opera: On Screen productions of *Opera Highlights*, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, *L’elisir d’amore*, *Live in South Lanarkshire* and *Così fan tutte*. Catriona previously studied at the Royal College of Music Opera Studio, the Royal Northern College of Music, ENO Opera Works and City of Edinburgh Music School. In 2018 she won the Kathleen Ferrier Loveday Song Prize and was a finalist in the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards and Royal Over-Seas League Vocal Category.

**Glen Cunningham** is a former Scottish Opera Connect member, having performed in the world premiere of Karen MacIver’s *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* in 2016 and Jonathan Dove’s *The Walk from the Garden* in 2015. He is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music’s Opera Studio, where he studied with Russell Smythe.He is the winner of the Joan Chissell Schumann Competition at the Royal College of Music, the Hugh S Robertson Prize for Scottish Singing at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the Wiseman Prize from the Sir James Caird Travelling Scholarships Trust.

**Lea Shaw** has also previously performed with the Company in the chorus of *The Fiery Angel.* Leais an award-winning Black/BIPOC mezzo-soprano from Colorado, who studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she received her Masters of Music, and a Masters of Opera from the Alexander Gibson Opera School, with the guidance of Helen Lawson, Susan Bullock and Rachel Nicholls. At the age of 25, she is among the youngest to have graduated from this degree pathway.

**Toby Hession** will continue his work with Scottish Opera having worked on *Falstaff* and made his conducting debut at the Orchestra of Scottish Opera’s lunchtime concerts at Live at No.40 in 2020/21. Toby studied as a repetiteur at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, principally with Elizabeth Rowe, but also received tuition from Susanna Stranders and Clive Timms. He is a prize-winning graduate of Clare College, Cambridge and is also an alumnus of the prestigious Georg Solti Accademia.

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**Sarah-Jane Davies**, Head of Casting at Scottish Opera, said: ‘I am proud to welcome Lea and Glen onto the Emerging Artists’ programme joining Catriona and Toby for the 2021/22 season. All have exciting projects ahead of them and are already busy preparing for these with the support of our team. Lea and Glen are eager to be starting their programme with us on tour, in Scotland, with the Opera Highlights performances. Catriona is delighted to be making her long anticipated mainstage debut in front of an audience for *The Gondoliers* and *Utopia Limited.* I look forward to working with them on this thrilling new venture.’

**Catriona Hewitson** said: ‘I feel extremely lucky to continue my journey with Scottish Opera into a second season. 2020/21 has not exactly been what we’d planned, but in many ways has been better than I could have expected and I feel I’ve grown a huge amount as an artist in a short space of time. Much of that is because of the support, dedication, encouragement and opportunities I’ve received from Scottish Opera and I feel very privileged to continue as an Emerging Artist in 2021/22. I cannot wait to see what happens next! Above everything else, I’m so excited to be performing for live audiences again. That is the one thing I’ve missed most over the last year. One of my dreams when I accepted this job was to sing on my home stage in Edinburgh as a member of my national opera company with family and friends in the audience. Now that is going to happen with *The Gondoliers* and I can tick the Festival Theatre in Edinburgh off my bucket list.’

**Glen Cunningham** said: ‘I am very excited to be a Scottish Opera 2021/22 Emerging Artist. The first ever opera I saw was a Scottish Opera production that toured up to Inverness, so it feels very fitting to be joining the Company in this way many years later. I am really looking forward to covering and performing some great roles, to be learning lots of new repertoire, and to be back performing regularly again after such a difficult 18 months for the arts.’

**Lea Shaw** said: ‘After what has been a trying year both creatively and culturally, I’m really looking forward to joining Scottish Opera as an Emerging Artist, and to learning from both the world-class team and my colleagues. Scottish Opera creates such a supportive environment in which to grow as an artist, and has so many exciting projects from community outreach to large scale productions. I’m very excited to be part of it.’

**Toby Hession** said: ‘My first couple of months at Scottish Opera have been totally mind-blowing - I’ve been lucky enough to work on the recent production of *Falstaff* and have also enjoyed opportunities to work with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera as part of *Live at No. 40*. I can’t quite believe that my first professional opera production as a member of music staff was not only such a monumental work, but such an incredible spectacle and accomplishment, with a stellar cast. It sets the bar very high for the rest of the year! I’m particularly looking forward to seeing more of Scotland whilst travelling around with the various productions I will work on this year. To be able to continue travelling around and exploring such a beautiful country whilst making music, telling stories, and most importantly learning alongside wonderful colleagues and friends really is a rare privilege.’

The Scottish Opera Emerging Artists programme was originally set up to nurture outstanding young singers. Over 12 years it has supported 33 singers and 55 young artists overall including composers, costume designers, repetiteurs and directors. Previous Emerging Artists include soprano **Jennifer France**, tenor **Elgan** **Llŷr** **Thomas**, baritone **Ben McAteer,** repetiteur **Jonathon Swinard**, and composers **Gareth Williams** and **Lliam Paterson**.

The programme is supported by Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artist Benefactors.

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

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ENDS

**Performance Diary**

**Edinburgh International Festival: Masterclasses with Thomas Quasthoff**

28 Aug, 12pm and 2.30pm, Old College Quad, Edinburgh

**Cosi** **fan tutte** (Catriona Hewitson)

Thu 9 Sep, 7pm, Lammermuir Festival, St Mary’s Parish Church, Haddington

Sat 11 Sep,7pm, Perth Concert Hall

**Opera Highlights** (Lea Shaw andGlen Cunningham)

Tue 14 Sep, 7pm, Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock

Thu 16 Sep, 7pm, Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh

Sat 18 Sep, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, The Byre, St Andrews

Tue 21 Sep, 7pm, Ballachulish Village Hall

Thu 23 Sep, 7pm, Strathpeffer Pavillion

Sat 25 Sep, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, An Lanntair, Stornoway

Tue 28 Sept, 7pm, Eastgate Theatre

Wed 29 Sep, 7pm, Gaiety Theatre, Ayr

Sat 2 Oct, 7pm, Queens Hall, Dunoon

***The Gondoliers*** (Catriona Hewitson)

Sat 16, 7.15pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Thu 21 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Fri 22 Oct, 3pm, Access *Gondoliers*\*, Theatre Royal Glasgow (Lea Shaw and Glen Cunningham)

Sat 23 Oct, 2.30pm and 7.15pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Thu 28 Oct, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Fri 29 Oct, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Sat 30 Oct, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Sun 31 Oct, 2.30pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Wed 3 Nov, Access *Gondoliers*\*, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh (Lea Shaw and Glen Cunningham)

Thu 4 Nov, 3pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Sat 6 Nov, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Wed 10 Nov, 7.15pm, Eden Court, Inverness

Thu 11 Nov, 7.15pm, Eden Court, Inverness

Fri 12 Nov, 3pm, Access *Gondoliers*\*, Eden Court, Inverness (Lea Shaw and Glen Cunningham)

Sat 13 Nov, 2.30pm and 7.15pm, Eden Court, Inverness

Sat 30 2022, 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

Sun 31 Mar 2022, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

Sat 2 Apr 2022, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

\* Access Gondoliers is a shortened version of the opera, introduced by a narrator and with cast and orchestra. These performances are open to all and are particularly suitable for anyone who might enjoy the flexibility and freedom to relax and move about as required.

**Utopia, Limited** (Catriona Hewitson and Glen Cunningham)

Wed 20 Oct 2022, 7.15pm

Fri 5 Nov, 7.15pm

Fri 1 Apr, 7.30pm

**Gala Concert**

Sun 12 Dec, Caird Hall, Dundee

Notes to Editors

Soprano **Catriona Hewitson** studied at the Royal College of Music Opera Studio, the Royal Northern College of Music, ENO Opera Works and City of Edinburgh Music School. Catriona won the 2018 Kathleen Ferrier Loveday Song Prize and was a finalist in the Maureen Lehane Vocal Awards and Royal Over-Seas League Vocal Category. Catriona performed with the Grange Festival in its inaugural season as Cis Albert Herring and as Donna Rinaldo for Glyndebourne Touring Opera as well as covering principal roles for Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Garsington Opera and English Touring Opera. Other roles include Susanna Le nozze di Figaro, directed by Sir Thomas Allen, Tytania A Midsummer Night’s Dream and Edwige in Offenbach’s Robinson Crusoe (RCM). Highlights on the concert platform include touring with the Ulster Orchestra and performing at the Royal Albert Hall, Bridgewater Hall, Cadogan Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Queen’s Hall, and at the Edinburgh International and Lammermuir Festivals.

Scottish tenor **Glen Cunningham** is a recent graduate of the Royal College of Music’s Opera Studio, where he studied with Russell Smythe. He is the winner of the Joan Chissell Schumann Competition at the Royal College of Music, the Hugh S Robertson Prize for Scottish Singing at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the Wiseman Prize from the Sir James Caird Travelling Scholarships Trust. Recent performances include a recital at Wigmore Hall with the Independent Opera Scholars. Highlights of the 2019-20 season included Gonzalve *L’heure* (Royal College of Music) and *Rossini* *Stabat Mater* (Inverness Choral Society). Other recent engagements include Bruckner’s Chorus with Te Deum (City of Glasgow Chorus and Orchestra of Scottish Opera), Bach’s *St John Passion* (Collegium Laureatum), Bach’s *Magnificat* and Haydn’s *Creation* (Leith Hill Music Festival), and Haydn’s *Nelson Mass* (Inverness Choral Society). Engagements elsewhere include Remendado *Carmen* (Rotterdam Opera), cover Don Ottavio *Don Giovanni* (Garsington Opera), chorus and cover Ferrando *Così fan tutte* and chorus *La traviata* (Opera Holland Park), Tamino *Die Zauberflöte*, Youngest Son in Judith Weir’s *The Vanishing Bridegroom* (British Youth Opera); Lacouf and Le Fils *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* (Les Azuriales Opera Young Artist Programme).

**Lea Shaw**is an award-winning Black/BIPOC Mezzo-soprano from Colorado, however, she is an alumnus of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she received her Masters of Music, and a Masters of Opera from the Alexander Gibson Opera School. Lea has appeared as a masterclass participant under Roger Vignoles, Nicky Spence, Susan Bullock, and Giselle Allan, and as soloist in Serenade To Music (Vaughan Williams) at the 2017 Leeds Lieder Festival. She is a recurring soloist in concert and oratorio, both in classical and baroque and in more contemporary works, having performed in the English premier of Erwin Schulloff's lost oratorio of the Communist Manifesto with the University of Glasgow in April 2018, soloist in *Duke Ellington's Sacred Service* as part of the 2017 West End Festival, the Chichester Psalms (EIF), and as featured soloist in Handel’s *Messiah*, the Bach *Magnificat,* and Haydn’s *Nelson Mass* across the UK. She has also performed as a soloist in recurring relationships with the Red Note Ensemble, the Ye Cronies Opera Society, the St. Magnus Festival, the Westbourne Music Series, Amnesty International, and has performed concerts with the Head of Opera, as well as the Principal, of the RCS. She has also performed for the Royal Family.  Lea’s awards include the the Kathleen Ferrier Bursary Competition, the Governor’s Recital Prize for Chamber music (winner, 2017), the Leonie Kayser Prize for Singing (winner, 2017).

**Toby Hession** is a British collaborative pianist, conductor and composer, and currently holds the position of Emerging Artist repetiteur at Scottish Opera. He studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and is a prize-winning graduate of Clare College, Cambridge where he also held a Choral Scholarship; he is also an alumnus of the prestigious Georg Solti Accademia. From 2010to 2015, Toby attended Chetham’s School of Music (Manchester), studying principally piano and composition. As an accompanist, Toby has played in venues including The Barbican, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and West Road Concert Hall (Cambridge), for artists including Wallis Giunta, Dima Bawab, Olivia Brett, Isabel Pfefferkorn, Aidan Coburn, and Adam Maxey. He was awarded the Accompanist Prize in the 2019 Clare Song Competition. He is an alumnus of the Pembroke Lieder Scheme, and has accompanied masterclasses with Sir Thomas Allen, Wallis Giunta, Andrew Staples, Nicholas Mulroy, Yvonne Howard, and Roger Vignoles. His opera production credits include: *Falstaff*, *Così fan tutte* (Scottish Opera); *Il Segreto di Susanna*, *Rita*, *Zanetto*, *Dido & Aeneas*, *The Angel Esmeralda* (world premiere)*, Opera Makers 2020* (world premiere) (GSMD).

The Company’s Opera on Screen productions are available to watch at: [www.scottishopera.org.uk/what-s-on/opera-on-screen](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/what-s-on/opera-on-screen)

The collection includes Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore*, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, *Opera Highlights*, Janáček’s *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, Menotti’s *The Telephone* and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.  
Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland.

The Company's performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly-commissioned world premieres, working in collaboration with the world's finest singers and creatives, alongside The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards and a Herald Angel, as well as a 2020 RPS Award.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland, from the largest-scale theatres to the smallest of rural venues, to ensure we are within reach of as many of our country's very dispersed population as possible. Our specially-adapted 40-foot long trailer brings ‘Pop-up Opera’ performances to thousands of people each year in a range of inspiring and unexpected community locations. This represents the most extensive touring programme of any opera company in Europe and is a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education and Outreach programme, which celebrates 50 years in 2021, includes an annual Primary Schools Tour, bringing upper primary-aged children the opportunity to perform their own specially-commissioned piece, alongside three professional singers. Around 120 schools and 9,000 pupils take part each year.

Scottish Opera aims to be inclusive and affordable through availability of free and cheap tickets, as well as performances offering audio description, and specially-devised shorter access performances.

Scottish Opera is core funded by The Scottish Government

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