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**Press Release**

13 December 2022

**SCOTTISH OPERA’S *OPERA HIGHLIGHTS* TOURS THIS SPRING TO 18 VENUES ACROSS SCOTLAND**

Scottish Opera’s hugely popular *Opera Highlights* is taking to the road this February, travelling across the country from the Scottish Borders to the Highlands and Islands.

The tour kicks off on Valentine’s Day at East Kilbride Village Theatre, exploring love in all its forms in one enchanting evening.

Marking its 60th Anniversary, *Opera Highlights* forms part of the Company’s commitment to bring opera to over 60 communities across all points of the compass around Scotland this Season. This beautifully crafted show travels to Crail, Garvald, Perth, Stonehaven, Boat of Garten, Invergarry, Wick, Orkney, Ullapool, Torridon, Skye, Oban, Campbeltown, Islay, Gretna, Hawick and Ayr.

Director **Emma Jenkins** and designer **Janis Hart** bring verve and creativity to this year’s original piano-accompanied production. The cast includes Scottish Opera 2022/23 Emerging Artist **Colin Murray***,*alongside **Annie Reilly** who both recently performed in the five-star production of *Ainadamar*, as well as **Andrew Henley** (*Thérèse* 2022)and **Holly Teague**, led from the piano by **James Longford**. Join the cast as they transport to another world, where anything is possible.

The production also features the world premiere of a new piece by Scottish Opera 2021/22 Emerging Artist and composer **Toby Hession**, with libretto by Emma Jenkins. Enitled ‘Told By An Idiot’ it is a modern and humorous re-working of *Macbeth*.

Scottish Opera’s Head of Music **Derek Clark**, introduces audiences to a treasure trove of work with a playlist from much-loved opera’s including Mozart’s *The* *Magic Flute* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, Beethoven’s *Fidelio,* Verdi’s *Macbeth* and Bizet’s *The Pearl Fishers* alongside music by Rimsky-Korsakov, Gounod and a composition written by Mendelssohn when he was just 12 years old.

Director **Emma Jenkins** said: ‘Four young singers in search of an identity find themselves, like *Alice in Wonderland* or the children of Narnia, propelled along an operatic rollercoaster of love and loss, devotion and desire, jealousy and jubilation. The overriding theme of the *Opera Highlights* is LOVE. Our singers put on and take off various roles as if possessed by the force of love in a fast-paced performance that celebrates not only the voice, but also ensemble work and physical theatre. All this against the backdrop of Janis Hart's stunning design which combines a retro 70s feel with an anarchic theatrical space in which one feels that anything could happen!’

Scottish Opera’s Head of Music**, Derek Clark** said: ‘The programme is the usual mixture of music from familiar operas and the less well-known, so we are confident that there will be something for everyone to enjoy, whether you are an experienced opera goer, or coming to see us for the first time.’

Having toured with a different cast in Autumn 2022, audience members said of the show:

‘Fantastic night in Markinch. A real tour de force - superb singing, brilliant acting and the set was masterful. I don't even know much about opera and I loved it!

‘Enjoyed some culture on my doorstep last night! Was superb, great performances and set, fab opera taster with a mix of drama, deaths and laughs.’

‘What an absolute treat – Scottish Opera’s Opera Highlights in my local town hall! Fabulously sung (of course), beautifully delivered and creatively staged. Thoroughly recommended.’

‘The entire performance was perfect; *The Pearl Fishers* was the finest I have ever experienced. Great credit also to the set designer – fun, imaginative and the amount of 'feeling' from such a versatile set was amazing.’

*Opera Highlights* is supported by **The Friends of Scottish Opera** and **JTH Charitable Trust**.

The production will be touring from 14 February to 25 March 2023. Tickets go on sale on 8 December at [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/opera-highlights-202223/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/opera-highlights-202223/)

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

You can follow Scottish Opera on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram **@ScottishOpera**

**Cast**

Soprano **Holy Teague**

Mezzo Soprano **Annie Reilly**

Tenor  **Andrew Henley**

Baritone **Colin Murray\***

Pianist **James Longford**

\*Scottish Opera 22/23 Emerging Artist

**Creative team**

Director  **Emma Jenkins**

Designer  **Janis Hart**

Assistant Director **Jim Osman**

**Performance diary**

Tuesday 14 February, East Kilbride Village Theatre

Thursday 16 February, Crail Community Hall

Saturday 18 February, Garvald Village Hall

Tuesday 21 February, Perth Theatre Joan Knight Studio

Thursday 23 February, Stonehaven Town Hall

Saturday 25 February, Boat of Garten Community Hall

Tuesday 28 February, Invergarry Community Centre

Thursday 2 March, Assembly Rooms, Wick

Saturday 4 March, Orkney Theatre, Kirkwall

Tuesday 7 March, Macphail Centre, Ullapool

Thursday 9 March, Loch Torridon Community Centre, Torridon

Saturday 11 March, Skye Gathering Hall

Tuesday 14 March, The Rockfield Centre, Oban

Thursday 16 March, Victoria Hall, Campbeltown

Saturday 18 March, Bowmore Hall, Islay

Tuesday 21 March, Stormont Hall, Gretna

Thursday 23 March, Tower Mill, Hawick

Saturday 25 March, Gaiety Theatre, Ayr

Notes to Editors

**Scottish Opera**

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. The Company was founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson with the goal ‘to lay the treasures of opera at the feet of the people of Scotland’, opening with performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The 2022/23 season marks its 60th Anniversary.

Scottish Opera’s performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly-commissioned world premieres, balancing favourites with under-explored works. The Company collaborates with the world’s finest singers and creatives, together with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses for each opera. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards, a 2017 UK Theatre Award, and a 2020 RPS Award. The Company took operas to Brooklyn in 2017 and Adelaide in 2020, and the 2022/23 season sees productions first staged at Scottish Opera appearing in Santa Fe, Madrid, Toulouse, and Los Angeles. The 60th Anniversary Season includes the UK fully-staged premiere of Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* and the Company premiere of Puccini’s *Il trittico*.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland to ensure performances are within reach of as many of the country’s dispersed population as possible – this year, 60 locations across the length and breadth of the country. Specially-adapted 40-foot long trailers bring Pop-up Opera performances to thousands of people each year. This is one of the most extensive touring programmes of any European opera company and a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education & Outreach programme, the oldest in Europe, includes an annual in-person and digital Primary Schools Tour, bringing children the opportunity to perform their own specially-commissioned piece alongside 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 committed to making opera for all, presenting opera at the highest possible standards in theatres across the country, outdoors on tour, and digital audiences around the world. The Company’s 2021 production of *The Gondoliers*, filmed live at Festival Theatre Edinburgh, is available on BBC iPlayer. Scottish Opera’s 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*, Menotti’s *The Telephone*, and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*. A new commission will be announced in 2023.

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