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##### **Press Release**

20 March 2024

**SCOTTISH OPERA TRAVELS TO LOCATIONS FROM WIGTOWN TO ORKNEY THIS SUMMER WITH POP-UP OPERA TOUR**

Scottish Opera’s much-loved Pop-up Opera tour kicks off on 25 May with shows for all the family, visiting venues in Perth, Falkirk, Wigtown, Moniaive, Ayr, West Kilbride, Whiting Bay in Arran, Coatbridge, Bishopbriggs, Shotts, Lochcarron, Balintore, Helmsdale and Stromness and St Margaret’s Hope in Orkney.

This summer, audiences can catch A Little Bit of *Don Giovanni* and **A Little Bit of *The Merry Widow*,** cleverly re-scored by Scottish Opera’s former Head of Music, **Derek Clark**.

These 30-minute shows take opera out of the theatre into unexpected places, and are ideal for anyone new to the artform who would like to try a taster of these classics by Mozart and Lehár.

Pop-up Opera was originally inspired by the ancient Japanese art of Kamishibai (which roughly translates as ‘paper story’), a form of entertainment where itinerant storytellers travelled between small communities, telling traditional folk tales using a set of small paintings to accompany the narrative. Scottish Opera’s productions use ten specially created illustrations to help the performers — storyteller **Allan Dunn**, along with singers **Jessica Leary** and **Andrew McTaggart**, cellist **Andrew Drummond Huggan** and guitarists **Sasha Savaloni** and **Ian Watt** — present the story.

Schoolchildren can also look forward to the tour popping up in primaries across the various locations for free performances of *Sophie & Bear,* a newly commissioned piece for Primary 1 to 4. The music is by **Graham McCusker**, who has composed for television series including *His Dark Materials* and *The Essex Serpent*, as well as scoring and conducting music for the Netflix feature film, *The Strays*. The story is written and directed by **Jessica Leary** and **Andrew McTaggart**.

Scottish Opera’sDirector of Outreach & Education, **Jane Davidson** MBE said: ‘This summer, the Pop-up Opera company are touring to schools and community halls across the country, with a blend of weekday visits to primary schools and weekend performances in public venues, including at Perth Festival of the Arts, Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival, and St Magnus International Festival.

‘We journey to 18th-century Venice with *Don Giovanni*, presenting a cleverly condensed version of Mozart’s ever-popular opera, packed full of dramatic confrontations brought about by Don Giovanni’s malevolent scheming which results in confusion, despair and violence for everyone he meets. We then head to the Parisian Embassy of Pontevedro for Lehár’s comic operetta *The Merry Widow*, which follows a wealthy woman’s search for true love.

‘We are delighted to also present *Sophie & Bear*, created specifically for five to eight year olds, which gives young minds coping strategies for everyday worries and reminds us we are not alone in facing them. Sophie cannot sleep – her thoughts are whirring and, in the darkness of bedtime, everything becomes more confusing. But with her trusty and kind teddy bear by her side, she learns how to take care of herself calmly and not be lost in anxiety.’

In Lehár’s *The Merry Widow*, a party is being thrown for the Grand Duke ofPontevedro – a poor, but fiercely independent, little European state. Among the guests is Hanna Glawari, a widow with twenty million francs from her late husband, and the eyes of half of Pontevedro on her to make sure her fortune – by love or luck – stays in the country to boost its fortunes. But at such a lavish celebration full of champagne, good cheer, and many waltzes, her heart and hand are not the only love affairs underway…

A Little Bit of *Don Giovanni* follows Mozart's famous Casanova from one conquest to the next, but when his seduction of Donna Anna results in the death of her father, has he finally taken things too far?

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

You can follow Scottish Opera on Twitter, Facebook, Tik-Tok, You Tube and Instagram **@ScottishOpera**

Cast

Storyteller **Allan Dunn**

Soprano **Jessica Leary**

Baritone **Andrew McTaggart**

Cello **Andrew Drummond Huggan**

Guitar **Sasha Savaloni / Ian Watt**

With illustrations by **Tim Gravestock** & **Essi Kimpimäki**

Performance Diary

Public performances

**Perth Festival of the Arts, St Matthew’s Church**

Saturday 25 May, 2pm & 4pm

**Falkirk Trinity Church**

Sunday 26 May, 4pm & 6pm

**Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival: Wigtown County Buildings**

Saturday 1 June, 1pm & 3pm

**Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival: Glencairn Institute, Moniaive**

Sunday 2 June, 1pm & 3pm

**The Cutty Sark Centre, Ayr**

Friday 7 June, 2pm & 4pm

**West Kilbride Village Hall**

Saturday 8 June,1pm & 3pm

**Whiting Bay Village Hall, Isle of Arran**

Sunday 9 June, 2pm & 4pm

**Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life, Coatbridge**

Friday 14 June, 7pm (double bill)

**War Memorial Hall, Bishopbriggs**

Saturday 15 June, 1pm & 3pm

**Henderson Theatre, Shotts**

Sunday 16 June, 1pm & 3pm

**The Lochcarron Centre**

Wednesday 19 June, 7pm (double bill)

**Seaboard Centre, Balintore**

Saturday 22 June,1pm & 3pm

**Helmsdale Community Centre**

Saturday 24 June, 2pm & 4pm

**St Magnus International Festival: Stromness Town Hall, Orkney**

Friday 28 June, 1pm & 3pm

**St Magnus International Festival: Cromarty Hall, St Margaret's Hope, Orkney**

Saturday 29 June, 1pm & 3pm

Notes to Editors

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 marked 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 saw productions first staged at Scottish Opera appearing in Santa Fe, Madrid, Toulouse, and Los Angeles. The 60th Anniversary Season included 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 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*, Menotti’s *The Telephone*, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, *Mister MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep*, and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Renowned for their flexibility and craftsmanship, Scottish Opera productions are frequently presented by opera houses across the globe. Two of our 60th Anniversary productions are presented by Welsh National Opera: Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* is in Cardiff, Llandudno, Bristol, Plymouth, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Southampton from September to November 2023. Puccini’s *Il trittico* can be seen in Cardiff in June 2024.

Following on from a run at the Opera Comique in Paris, Detroit Opera perform our 2019 production of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves* in April 2024 (having just presented *Ainadamar).* In addition, our 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* is performed twice in Canada: at Vancouver Opera in February 2024, and at Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in April and May 2024.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.

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