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**Press Release**

15 December 2021

**NEW *OPERA HIGHLIGHTS* PRODUCTION TOURS TO 18 LOCAL VENUES AROUND SCOTLAND THIS SPRING**

Tickets are on sale now for a new vaudeville-inspired *Opera Highlights* show that travels around Scotland to 18 local venues, including in the Outer Hebrides.

Starting on 8 February at Websters Theatre in Glasgow’s West End the tour visits Birnam, Midmar, Fochabers, Tain, Wick, Harris, North Uist, Isle of Barra, Ardfern, Lochranza, Cove, Newton Stewart, Melrose, Lockerbie, Troon, Killin and finishes at Cumbernauld Theatre on 19 March.

**John Savournin** directs a cast that includes Scottish soprano **Monica McGhee**, former Scottish Opera Emerging Artists **Margo Arsane** and **Shengzhi Ren**, who were both in *Così fan tutte* earlier this year,and **Dan Shelvey** (*The Gondoliers* 2021). This is a great chance for audiences to see Margo and Shengzhi perform in *Opera Highlights*, as they were originally scheduled to take part in the tour last year, before it was cancelled because of the pandemic. **Mark Sandon** joins the singers as pianist and Music Director.

The Edwardian-inspired production, designed by **Janis Hart**, is an opportunity to hear a whole range of music in just one evening. Curated by Scottish Opera’s Head of Music **Derek Clark**, audiences can enjoy much-loved classics including *Hansel & Gretel*, *Die* *Fledermaus* and *La bohème,* as well as lesser known gems. The production also features the world premiere of a new piece by Scottish composer, **Lucie Treacher**. The quartet, entitled ‘To the Lighthouse’, weaves together scenes from the 1927 novel by Virginia Woolf.

Director **John Savournin**,said: ‘There is a such a rich variety of repertoire in this season's *Opera Highlights* - Puccini to Operetta, to a newly-commissioned piece by up-and-coming Scottish composer, Lucie Treacher - and I'm so excited to create a fun, visual world full of performance magic.’

Scottish Opera General Director, **Alex Reedijk,** said: ‘I am thrilled that such a fine company of young performers is able to tour all across Scotland in the Spring. I hope that this delightfully entertaining and vaudevillian-themed *Opera Highlights* will help to encourage our audiences to make a welcome and safe return to live performances, for the first time in two years in many cases.’

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

Tickets are on sale from December 15 at [www.scottishopera.org.uk](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk)

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

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***Opera Highlights* Cast and Creative Team**

Musical Director/Pianist **Mark Sandon**

Director **John Savournin**

Designer  **Janis Hart**

Soprano **Monica McGhee**

Mezzo-soprano **Margo Arsane**

Tenor **Shengzhi Ren**

Baritone **Dan Shelvey**

**Performance dates and venues**

Tuesday 8 February, 7.30pm, Websters Theatre, Glasgow

Thursday 10 February, 7.30pm, Birnam Arts Centre, Birnam

Saturday 12 February, 7.30pm, Midmar Hall, Inverurie

Tuesday 15 February, 7.30pm, Fochabers Institute, Moray

Thursday 17 February, 7.30pm, Duthac Centre, Tain

Saturday 19 February, 7.30pm, Wick Assembly Rooms, Wick

Tuesday 22 February, 7.30pm, Tarbert Community Centre, Tarbert, Harris

Thursday 24 February, 7.30pm, Carinish Hall, North Uist

Saturday 26 February, 7.30pm, Castlebay Hall, Isle of Barra

Tuesday 1 March, 7.30pm, Craignish Village Hall, Ardfern

Thursday 3 March, 7.30pm, Village Hall, Lochranza

Saturday 5 March, 7.30pm, Cove Burgh Halls, Helensburgh

Tuesday 8 March, 7.30pm, The Cinema, Newton Stewart

Thursday 10 March, 7.30pm, Corn Exchange, Melrose

 Saturday 12 March, 7.30pm, Lockerbie Town Hall, Lockerbie

Tuesday 15 March, 7.30pm, Walker Hall, Troon

Thursday 17 March, 7.30pm, McLaren Halls, Killin

Saturday 19 March, 7.30pm, Cumbernauld Theatre, Cumbernauld

Notes to Editors

The Company’s Opera on Screen productions are available to watch at: 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. In 2021 the Company returned to live audiences with Sir David McVicar’s new production of Verdi’s *Falstaff* performed in Glasgow and at Edinburgh International Festival.

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. In the Summer of 2021 the Company performed over 200 shows of its Pop-up Opera Roadshow, to socially distanced audiences of over 8000. 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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