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##### Press Release

10 February 2022

**SCOTTISH OPERA’S NEW PRIMARY SCHOOLS TOUR PRODUCTION *THE LAST ALIENS***

**GOES ON THE ROAD THIS MONTH**

On 23 February, Scottish Opera’s newly commissioned primary schools tour production, *The Last Aliens*, begins its tour around Scotland.

**It will visit schools in Glasgow, South Lanarkshire, Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, West Lothian, the Highlands, Moray, Edinburgh, Dumfries and Galloway, Stirlingshire, Aberdeenshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute, North Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, Angus, Shetland and Orkney.**

**Scottish Opera’s Education and Outreach Department has been working in Primary Schools for 50 years,** and teachers from schools which have already taken part agree that the tour broadened the children’s cultural experiences, improved team work skills, increased cultural confidence as well as singing ability, and supported the aims of Curriculum for Excellence.

As the pandemic resulted in the Company’s last Primary School Tour of *Warriors! The Emperor’s Incredible* *Army* coming to a halt in March 2020, with the Education team instead offering an online children’s opera entitled *Fever!*, they are thrilled to be back in schools to offer in- person workshops once again.

*The Last Aliens*, composed by **Alan Penman** with lyrics by **Ross Stenhouse,** is an intergalactic adventure for primary 5 to 7 pupils. A **funny and relevant story about saving Planet Earth,** they learn **five fantastic** in their own classrooms, and then the Scottish Opera Teaching Artists team arrive at the school for a morning to teach movement and choreography to prepare for a 30-minute performance in front of fellow pupils, friends and family. In a normal year, close to 9,000 children across Scotland take part in these performances with many more thousands of friends and families coming to see them in action.

Teachers can sign up to access *The Last Aliens* online teaching resources to work through with their pupils. This programme of activities includes audio and video teaching aids, as well as a series of practical tasks and exercises grouped into three categories: Watch The Earth, Explore The Science and Understand The Opera, covering subjects including recycling, safe internet use, basic electrics, listening and rhythm, as well as group working, self-analysis, empathy and more.

**Jane Davidson, Director of Education and Outreach at Scottish Opera said: ’This is a completely new hybrid approach to our longest running project; the Primary Schools Opera tour - which we are incredibly proud to bring back to schools in this 50th anniversary year of Scottish Opera’s education programme. Through engaging directly with our artists – first online and then in ‘real life’, the pupils can experience the excitement of rehearsing and performing a meaningful and funny musical story as well as exploring this crucially important subject matter across a range of key areas in the core curriculum. As ever, our intention is to demonstrate what an effective learning and teaching tool the art form of opera is, with this unique blend of science, technology, literacy, communication skills and responsible citizenship - all connected by creativity.’**

All *The Last Aliens* introductory and teaching films feature members of the Company’s Primary Schools team, in character as the crew of the SOE (Scottish Orbital Expedition) craft. SOE has been tasked with monitoring the Earth’s Global Climate Change and gathering data on the impact this is having on the natural environment. By completing all the tasks and activities, the pupils can contribute their new found knowledge towards helping to build the case for convincing world leaders that immediate action is required to reverse the damage. The SOE team invite the pupils to join them in rehearsing and performing a brand new opera on the subject: *The Last Aliens*.

The opera **tells the story of a spaceship arriving in orbit around Earth; the occupants have travelled all the way across the galaxy** to convince everyone of the need to join together and take action to protect the planet for future generations. Down on the planet’s surface, The Scientists and The Military are at complete loggerheads about what to do next and it all seems pretty bleak… until the visitors bring them a message that they can’t ignore.

*The Last Aliens* is supported by The Mickel Fund, Harbinson’s Charitable Trust, The Hayward Sanderson Trust and Scottish Opera's Education Angels, with thanks to the Educational Institute of Scotland for a donation towards the cost of the production.

For more details about *The Last Aliens*, please visit [www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-last-aliens/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-last-aliens/)

-ENDS-

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

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

Creative team

Composer **Alan Penman**

Lyrics **Ross Stenhouse**

Stage Manager **Rose Ann Gross**

Costume Designer & Maker **Patricia Kenny**

Producer **Jane Davidson**

Film Director & Illustrator **Iain Piercy**

Videographer **Bevis Evans-Teush**

Motion Graphics Designer **Viola Madau**

Teaching Resources **Scu Moncur**

**Performance diary**

Wednesday 23 February Garrowhill Primary School, Glasgow

Thursday 24 February Robert Smilie Memorial Primary School Larkhall

Friday 25 February Dollar Academy, Clackmannanshire

Monday 28 February The High School of Glasgow

Tuesday 1 March Milngavie Primary School East Dunbartonshire

Friday 4 March Shawlands Primary School Glasgow

Monday 7 March Sciennes Primary School, Edinburgh

Tuesday 8 March Linlithgow Primary School

Wednesday 9 March Albyn School, Aberdeen

Thursday 10 March Lochardil Primary School, Inverness

Friday 11 March Mosstowie Primary School, Moray

Monday 14 March Corstophine Primary School, Edinburgh

Tuesday 15 March Balgreen Primary School, Edinburgh

Wednesday16 March Dalry Primary School, Edinburgh

Thursday 17 March Bruntsfield Primary School, Edinburgh

Tuesday 22 March Wallacestone Primary School, Falkirk

Wednesday 23 March Carronshore Primary School, Falkirk

Monday 28 March Queensferry Primary School, Edinburgh

Tuesday 29 March South Morningside Primary School, Edinburgh

Wednesday 30 March Blackhall Primary School, Edinburgh

Wednesday 6 April Trinity Primary School, Edinburgh

Thursday 7 April Towerbank Primary School, Edinburgh

Thursday 21 April Fettes College Prep School, Edinburgh

Friday 22 April Kilmacolm Primary School, Kilmacolm

Monday 25 April Strachur Primary School and Pre-5 Unit, Argyll

Tuesday 26, April Kirn Primary School, Doon

Wednesday 27 April St Mary’s Primary School, Largs

Thursday 28 April Glebe Primary School, Irvine

Friday 29 April Holmston Primary School, Ayr

Tuesday 3 May Inverbrothock Primary School, Arbroath

Wednesday 4 May Northmuir Primary School, Angus

Tuesday 10 May Turriff Primary School, Turriff

Wednesday 11 May Hopeman Primary School, Hopeman

Tuesday 17 May Edinbane Primary School, Isle of Skye

Wednesday 18 May Cluny Primary School, Buckie, Moray

Thursday 19 May Keith Primary School, Moray

Friday 20 May Aberlour Primary School, Moray

Thursday 26 May Stromness Primary School, Orkney

Friday May 27 Sanday Primary School, Orkney

Notes to Editors

All productions are created and performed in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

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 nearly 200 shows of its Pop-up Opera Roadshow, to socially distanced audiences of 11,014 people. 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 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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**For additional press details please contact:**

Emily Henderson, Press Manager, 0141 242 0511,**emily.henderson@scottishopera.org.uk**

Julie McLaughlin, Press Officer, 0141 242 0552, **julie.mclaughlin@scottishopera.org.uk**