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##### Press Release

22 November 2022

**SCOTTISH OPERA WELCOMES 60TH EMERGING ARTIST IN 60TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON**

A talented group of Emerging Artists has joined Scottish Opera for the 2022/23 Season: tenor **Osian Wyn Bowen**, soprano **Zoe Drummond**, costume trainee **Isabelle Mercier**, baritone **Colin Murray**, mezzo-soprano **Lea Shaw** (returning for a second Season), and repetiteur **Kristina Yorgova.**

In this year, which is the Company’s 60th Season, Scottish Opera is delighted to be welcoming its 60th Emerging Artist sinceprogramme began in 2009. Initially set up to offer outstanding young singers a period of full-time work to help them launch their careers, the programme now also includes positions for a repetiteur and a costume trainee. Previous Emerging Artists include soprano Jennifer France, repetiteur Jonathon Swinard, baritone Ben McAteer and composers Gareth Williams and Lliam Paterson.

The Emerging Artists have opportunities to perform with Scottish Opera in live productions throughout the Season as well as work in-house with staff and visiting coaches to develop their skills.Supported by **Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artist Benefactors and Supporters**, **Elizabeth Salvesen** and **Jean and Roger Miller Charitable Trust**, they will also perform in recitals at University of Glasgow and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

**Sarah-Janes Davies**, **Head of Casting at Scottish Opera** said: ‘I am proud to welcome Zoe, Osian, Colin and Kristina onto the Emerging Artists programme, joining Lea for the 2022/23 season. All have exciting projects ahead of them and are already busy preparing for these with the support of our team. Kristina, Zoe and Osian have just completed a very successful tour of Scotland with the *Opera* *Highlights* performances, whilst Lea and Colin recently finished performing in our five-star production of *Ainadamar.* They will all join up together for the lunchtime recitals at the RCS and Glasgow.I look forward to working with them all on this thrilling new adventure.’

**Emma Butchart, Deputy Head of Costume** said: ‘We are very pleased to welcome Isabelle, our latest Costume Trainee, to the team. She started off with a bang as Assistant Supervisor to our Head of Costume, Lorna Price, on our recent production of *Ainadamar*. Isabelle’s continuing her training in all areas of the costume department and has now begun in the workroom on our upcoming productions of *Il trittico* and *Carmen*. During her yearlong traineeship, she will have the pleasure of joining the running wardrobe team on one of our productions. We have no doubt it will be another successful partnership.’

Welsh tenor **Osian Wyn Bowen** originates from the harbour town of Burry Port, South Wales. Osian is a recent graduate of the David Seligman Opera School at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. In 2019, Osian was the winner of the MOCSA Young Welsh Singer of the Year and a finalist in the RWCMD Ian Stoutzker Prize for most outstanding musician. He was also a finalist in the 2022 Welsh Singers Competition. In the 2021/22 Season at Scottish Opera, Osian sang in productions of *The Gondoliers* and *Utopia, Limited*. This Season, he has appeared in the Autumn *Opera Highlights* tour and is in the cast of *Il trittico* and *Carmen* next year.

Australian soprano **Zoe Drummond** is a graduate of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and the Melba Opera Trust. She performed in Scottish Opera’s recent production of *The Gondoliers*, *Utopia, Limited* and the *Opera Highlights* Spring 2020 tour. This Season, she performs in *Carmen* and featured in the *Opera Highlights* Autumn tour.

Costume trainee **Isabelle Mercier** is originally from Melbourne, Australia, and moved to the UK in 2018 to study at the Arts University Plymouth completing a Bachelors of Costume Production and Associated Crafts in 2021. Since then, she has worked as a seamstress for a small local business, as well as a dresser at the Theatre Royal Plymouth working on shows such as *Singing in The Rain*. Other projects she has worked on include *Macbeth* for The Actor’s Wheel (associated with Marjon University) for which she helped design the costumes, and *California Suite* (an amateur theatre production during her time at High School), which included dressing and costume sourcing.

**Colin Murray** is a Glasgow-based baritone and graduate of the Alexander Gibson Opera School at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. He is an in-demand concert soloist, award-winning ensemble singer, and has appeared in Scottish Opera productions of *Don Giovanni*, *The Gondoliers*, *Utopia, Limited* and *Candide*. This Season, he has performed in *Ainadamar* and *Thérèse,* and will be in the Company’s upcoming production of *Carmen*, and the Spring 2023 *Opera Highlights* tour.

Mezzo soprano **Lea Shaw** returns as an Emerging Artist for a second year,having previously performed in Company’s productions of *Candide*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Don Giovanni*, *Opera Highlights, Mavra* and 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. Lea was a member of the *Ainadamar* ensemble, and will appear in *Carmen* as Mercédès.

Bulgarian pianist **Kristina Yorgova** graduated with a MMus from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland where she studied with Petras Geniusas and Fali Pavri. She was a finalist at the 8th Stasys Vainiunas International Piano Competition in Lithuania. Kristina has performed as a soloist with the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra, The RCS Symphony Orchestra, and the Stara Zagora and Vidin Orchestras in Bulgaria. She has played recitals across Europe including in Bulgaria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, and Russia. Kristina has freelanced in orchestral piano / celeste with the BBC SSO since March 2019. Projects included Reich’s *Music for 18 Musicians*, Stravinsky’s *Firebird* and *Petrushka*, and Ligeti’s *Mysteries of the Macabre*. In 2020, Kristina worked for the RCS Vocal Studies department, coaching singers at Bachelor’s and Master’s level. As an accompanist, she played for RCS vocal master classes and worked closely with Head of Coaching Julia Lynch in German lieder classes. She is passionate about collaborating with singers, most recently with mezzo-soprano Svetlina Stoyanova. Kristina was a Studio Artist Repetiteur for 2020-2022 at the Mascarade Opera Studio in Florence, where her work was guided by Head of Music Julia Lynch and conductors Sándor Karolyi and Jonathan Santagada.

Performance Diary

**1 December**

University of Glasgow, 1.10pm

**2 December**

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, 1pm

-ENDS-

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

**PHOTO:** Scottish Opera Emerging Artists (left to right) Zoe Drummond, Colin Murray, Isabelle Mercier, Lea Shaw, Kristina Yorgova and Osian Wyn Bowen. Credit Christina Riley.

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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