



PRESS RELEASE

30 December 2016

**** EMBARGOED UNTIL 10.31pm, 30 DECEMBER 2016 ****

SCOTTISH OPERA'S DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AWARDED MBE IN NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST

Jane Davidson, Director of Outreach and Education at Scottish Opera, has been appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the New Year 2017 Honours List. She will be invited to attend an Investiture later in the year to receive the award.

Jane has been with Scottish Opera's education team – established in 1971, making it the oldest education and outreach unit of any opera company in Europe – since 1984. She is responsible for the formulation of policy for the Company's education strategy, and for the commissioning of new works for education and outreach projects.

'I'm delighted and extremely touched to receive this honour in recognition of the work that Scottish Opera's unique outreach programme has achieved in Scotland and internationally,' said Jane.

She continued: 'Not many of us are fortunate enough to spend their working life in an environment that is constantly evolving, packed with creativity, artistically inspiring and full of new challenges – and that's just an average day! To the many talented artists, teachers, theatre makers and practitioners with whom I have been privileged to work, thank you for the journey.'

Alex Reedijk, General Director at Scottish Opera said: 'Scottish Opera is delighted that Jane's achievements have been recognised in this way. For over 30 years she has been, and continues to be, a wonderfully creative and dynamic force within the Company. Her enthusiasm and dedication to using the key elements of opera – music, singing, theatre, storytelling – to engage with people of all ages and from communities across Scotland and beyond is boundless. She has led the way in establishing best practice which has seen the Company's education work presented across Scotland, the UK and internationally, and she constantly brings both ideas and informed insight to creating programmes that are both relevant and appealing.'

The education department's ground-breaking work engages with people of all ages and abilities, including babies, nursery, primary and secondary school children, students and adult community groups. Its programming includes Connect Company, a unique programme for aspiring young singers, instrumental musicians or stage managers aged 16 to 21, and Memory Spinners, for people living with dementia. In November 2016, Scottish Opera presented the UK's very first dementia friendly opera in partnership with Festival Theatre Edinburgh.

During her time with the Company, Jane has commissioned over 30 new works for Scottish Opera including a hugely successful trilogy of works for under 5s: *BabyO*, *SensoryO* and *KidO*, which toured across the UK, the Middle East, Hong Kong and New Zealand, playing to over 20,000 people between 2010 and 2015.

Between 2010 and 2014, Jane led a collaboration involving arts organisations across five continents to create and present an international youth opera; *Anamchara: Songs of Friendship*. The world premiere was staged as part of the cultural celebrations surrounding Glasgow's hosting of the 2014 Commonwealth Games.

Jane has also been involved in a range of training and best practice initiatives for young opera artists via RESEO (European Network for Opera and Dance Education) – an outreach and

education organisation linking over 50 of Europe's opera, ballet and contemporary dance companies.

She has initiated partnerships with the Scottish Government, the British Council and a wide range of other international cultural organisations including Cape Town Opera, Calgary Opera and the Yuva Ekta Foundation in India and has taken projects to the West Indies, Singapore, Hong Kong, Bermuda, Finland, China, Spain and the Republic of Georgia.

Jane represents Scottish Opera's interests in national education strategies such as the Scottish Government's education initiative A Curriculum for Excellence, and is a member of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group for China.

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

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

Notes to Editors

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. It was founded by Alexander Gibson in 1962 and was inaugurated with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the King's Theatre in Glasgow.

Notable achievements include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Inés de Castro* at the 1996 Edinburgh International Festival and complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production. Recent commissions include *Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland* (2008-10); *The Lady from the Sea*, *Clemency*, the double bill of *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* (winner of a South Bank Sky Arts Award) which premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival and 2016's *The Devil Inside* by Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh.

Scottish Opera is committed to bringing the widest possible range of opera, performed to the highest possible standards, to the maximum audience throughout Scotland and the UK. Each

year it performs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness, as well as smaller theatres, village halls and community centres throughout the country.

Scottish Opera's Education and Outreach Department was the first of its kind of any opera company in Europe. It operates an extensive programme which involves over 8,000 primary school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and free *Unwrapped* taster sessions.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



For additional press details please contact:

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

Eilidh Clark, Press Officer, 0141 242 0552, eilidh.clark@scottishopera.org.uk