



PRESS RELEASE

9 March 2017

GROUND-BREAKING NEW OPERA FOR BABIES

**Scottish Opera presents *BambinO* in collaboration with
Manchester International Festival and Improbable**

The long-awaited follow up to Scottish Opera's hugely successful *BabyO* performances, *BambinO* is a pioneering and unique piece of music theatre for infants aged 6 to 18 months.

A new co-production with Manchester International Festival and Improbable, the show premieres at Manchester International Festival in July, before travelling to Edinburgh as part of Edinburgh Festival Fringe, then to Glasgow for performances in Scottish Opera's Production Studios.

Written by Scottish Opera's Composer in Residence **Liam Paterson** and directed by Improbable's critically-acclaimed **Phelim McDermott**, *BambinO* will be a celebration of the possibilities of music and the power of the infant imagination.

The show reinvents operatic language and traditions for children at an age when their minds are wide open to new sounds, images and experiences. Babies are free to explore during the performance, and to interact with the singers, musicians and each other.

Director, **Phelim McDermott**, said: 'It is inspiring to create a new opera for what is possibly the most discerning – and important – audience there is. We all know that babies respond to music and we want to nurture and stimulate that relationship through their very first opera.'

Scottish Opera's Composer in Residence, **Liam Paterson**, continued: '*BambinO* will bring an operatic experience to a little audience with ears open to discovering new sounds. It is so exciting to create a colourful and vibrant work that can engage both babies and adults fully, while conveying the drama and passion of opera. The opportunity for me to work with as imaginative a director as Phelim McDermott is fantastic and truly inspiring. He and design team Giuseppe Belli and Emma Belli will bring a beautifully crafted operatic world to a whole new audience!'

Scottish Opera's Director of Education and Outreach, **Jane Davidson**, said: 'Incorporating rich, exuberant colours and images – both musically and visually – we've created the perfect miniature opera. Complete with percussion, cello and tiny pianos, all four performers fashion a magical soundscape that will enthral and challenge both the babies and the adults who come along with them. This is not a 'baby' show in a traditional sense; this is baby baroque as you've never seen it before!'

BambinO is commissioned and produced by Scottish Opera, Manchester International Festival and Improbable. It is supported by Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle and Scottish Opera's Education Angels.

-ENDS-

Cast and Creative Team

Composer	Liam Paterson #
Director	Phelim McDermott
Designers	Giuseppe Belli & Emma Belli
Soprano	Charlotte Hoather
Baritone	Timothy Connor

Cello **Laura Sergeant**
Percussion **Stuart Semple**

Scottish Opera Emerging Artist

Performance Diary

Pavilion Theatre, Manchester (Part of Manchester International Festival)

4 Jul 1.30pm (Preview performance)

5 Jul 10.30am & 1.30pm

(Further venues around Greater Manchester, 6 to 16 Jul)

On sale from 9 March.

Edinburgh Academy (Part of Edinburgh Festival Fringe)

8 to 20 Aug (excl. Mon 14 Aug)

10.00am & 11.30am

Scottish Opera Production Studios, Glasgow

21 Oct to 5 Nov (excl. Mon & Tue)

10.00am & 11.30am

Full details on ticket sales for Edinburgh and Glasgow performances available from 5 April.

Visit www.scottishopera.org.uk

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

Notes to Editors

Liam Paterson biography:

Liam Paterson, from Aberdeenshire, is Composer in Residence at Scottish Opera. He trained at the University of Cambridge and as a répétiteur and accompanist at The Guildhall School of

Music and Drama. Composition studies have included private lessons with Judith Weir and Errollyn Wallen; he is currently mentored by David Sawer and Nicola LeFanu.

His work has been performed at Tête à Tête Opera Festival (Central St. Martin's), the St. Magnus Festival and Glasgow's Aye Write! Festival, where he presented a major song cycle based on poetry by the first Scots Makar, Edwin Morgan. Liam's music has been heard in venues ranging from Theatre Royal Glasgow to the Royal Festival Hall, London. This Season, the world premiere of Liam's new work for Scottish Opera, *The 8th Door*, takes place in March. This specially devised companion piece to *Bluebeard's Castle* is directed by Matthew Lenton of Vanishing Point theatre company, and conducted by Sian Edwards.

Phelim McDermott biography:

Phelim McDermott is a founder member of Improbable and co-artistic director. Improbable company credits include *70 Hill Lane*; *Lifegame*; *Animo*; *Coma*; *Spirit*; *Sticky*; *Cinderella*; *The Hanging Man*; *Theatre of Blood* in collaboration with the National Theatre; *Panic*; *Beauty and the Beast* in co-production with ONEOFUS; *The Tempest*, a co-production with Northern Stage and Oxford Playhouse; *Opening Skinners Box*, a co-production with Northern Stage and West Yorkshire Playhouse and, most recently, *Lost Without Words*, a co-production with the National Theatre.

Also, for Improbable, Phelim has directed an array of operas such as Philip Glass' *Satyagraha*; *The Perfect American* and, most recently, *Akhnaten*, as well as Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in collaboration with English National Opera and the Metropolitan Opera.

Other productions he has directed include the Olivier Award winning *Shockheaded Peter*; *Alex* at The Arts Theatre; *The Ghost Downstairs* at Leicester Haymarket; *Dr Faustus* and *Improbable Tales* at Nottingham Playhouse and *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Government Inspector* at West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Scottish Opera:

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.



Manchester International Festival:

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is the world's first festival of original, new work and special events, staged every two years in Manchester, UK. MIF launched in 2007 as an artist-led festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture. MIF has commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists including Björk, Steve McQueen, Robert Wilson, Wayne McGregor, Maxine Peake, The xx, Zaha Hadid Architects, Damon Albarn, Punchdrunk, Elbow and Marina Abramović.

MIF brings together world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work, staged in venues across Greater Manchester – from theatres, galleries and concert halls to railway depots, churches and car parks. MIF works closely with venues, festivals and other cultural organisations around the world, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of these projects possible. The Festival also works widely within communities around Manchester, originally with MIF Creative and now with a new initiative called My Festival.

MIF's Artistic Director and CEO is John McGrath, previously the Founding Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales. Earlier this year, MIF was confirmed as the operator of Factory, a new £110 million cultural centre in Manchester due to open in 2020.

MIF is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

Improbable:

Improbable is led by Phelim McDermott and Lee Simpson and uses improvisation to create spectacular shows, support and nurture artists and the arts sector as a whole, and facilitate social change. We believe that art is for everyone and that our society needs a cultural shift that puts creativity at the heart of everyday life.

We create an astonishing breadth of work, from small-scale improvised shows to enormous outdoor spectacles; from our take on classic plays and operas to tours of new work that travel the UK and often the world. Alongside this, our Devoted & Disgruntled programme brings the arts community together to identify and work on shared issues; and our Participation

programme takes improvisation to people and communities who may have had little contact with the arts before. We were founded in 1996 (becoming a charity in 2014), are based in London, and are a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England.

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