



PRESS RELEASE

21 April 2017

**SCOTTISH PREMIERE OF *LE VILLI* CLOSES THE SUNDAY
SERIES: OPERA IN CONCERT 2016/17 SEASON**

The last performance in this Season's The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert – Puccini's *Le Villi* – takes place on May 21.

Le Villi is based on the same legend as the ballet *Giselle* and was written in 1883. The opera-ballet was Puccini's first stage work, and this performance at Theatre Royal Glasgow marks its Scottish premiere.

Scottish Opera's Music Director, **Stuart Stratford**, conducts soloists **Karen Slack** as Anna, **Stephen Gadd** as Guglielmo and **Peter Auty** as Roberto. The latter two singers were both last seen at October's Sunday Series performance of *L'amico Fritz*, and they are joined by a chorus and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

This concert also includes *Preludio Sinfonico*, *Crisantemi* and *Capriccio Sinfonico*. It is performed during the run of the Company's staged production of Puccini's classic *La bohème*,

also conducted by **Stuart Stratford**, which has performances in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Inverness.

Stuart Stratford said: 'We are delighted to conclude this year's The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert with Puccini's first stage work which offers a wonderful contrast to *La bohème*. It is a great opportunity to hear Puccini's seldom-performed first opera and to experience, in the first half of the concert, three of his exquisite early orchestral pieces.'

-ENDS-

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Cast and Creative Team

Conductor	Stuart Stratford
Guglielmo	Stephen Gadd
Anna	Karen Slack
Roberto	Peter Auty

Performance Diary for The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert

Puccini's *Le Villi*
21 May 2017, 3pm

Notes to Editors

Stuart Stratford's biography:

Stuart Stratford was appointed Music Director of Scottish Opera from 1 June 2015. Stuart read music at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, studying conducting with David Parry. He also spent three years studying with the legendary conducting teacher, Ilya Aleksandrovich Musin, at the Saint Petersburg State Conservatoire, Symphonic and Operatic Conducting Faculty. He was

the Junior Fellow in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, in 1999 and 2000.

Opera is at the core of his activities. In the UK Stuart has conducted for English National Opera, Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Birmingham Opera Company and Buxton Festival, as well as Scottish Opera, with repertoire including *Giovanna d'Arco*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Khovanshchina*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Don Giovanni*, *Satyagraha*, *Pagliacci*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Faust*, *The Turn of the Screw*, *Falstaff*, *La bohème*, *Candide*, *Swanhunter* (Dove), *Tobias and the Angel* (Dove), *Ion* (Param Vir), *Kantan* (Goehr), *L'altra Euridice* (Dove), *Ariadne* (Langer), and *The Embalmer* (Batistelli). He gave the world staged premiere of *The Maiden in the Tower* (Sibelius) and the UK staged premiere of *Kashchei the Immortal* (Rimsky-Korsakov).

He has been a regular conductor at Opera Holland Park and has conducted performances of *Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*, *Jenůfa*, *Iolanta*, *Káťa Kabanová*, *La Forza del Destino*, *L'amico Fritz*, *Rigoletto*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *La Fanciulla del West* and *Il Trittico*.

Outside the UK, Stuart has worked at the Finnish National Opera (*Doctor Atomic*), Hong Kong (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), at Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and at the Birgitta Festival with the Estonian National Opera (*Faust*).

He has conducted concerts with many of the UK orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia, London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata and Viva Sinfonia.

Abroad Stuart works with the Porto Symphony Orchestra, Remix Ensemble, Orchestra of the Algarve, Perm Opera and Ballet Theater, Ural Symphony Orchestra in Yekaterinburg where he gave the Russian premiere of *Momentum* (Turnage) and *Airport Scenes* (Dove). With the Australian Chamber Orchestra in Sydney he has recorded a joint Channel 4 and Australian Broadcasting Corporation film opera, *The Eternity Man*, which was broadcast in both the UK and Australia.

Scottish Opera biography:

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.



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