



PRESS RELEASE

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## SCOTTISH OPERA WELCOMES SEVEN EMERGING ARTISTS FOR 2017/18 SEASON

Scottish Opera has welcomed a talented new group of Emerging Artists for the 2017/18 Season: **Catherine Backhouse, Samuel Bordoli, Alexey Gusev, Patrick Milne, Ellen Murgatroyd, Alex Otterburn** and **Laura Zigmantaite**.

The Scottish Opera Emerging Artists programme offers young artists a period of full-time work with the Company to help them launch their careers. Initially set up to nurture outstanding young singers, the programme now also includes positions for a repetiteur, costume trainee and a composer in residence.

Mezzo-soprano **Catherine Backhouse**, The Robertson Trust Scholarship Emerging Artist, hails from Edinburgh and began singing as a chorister in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral. She graduated with an honours degree in music from Durham University and gained a distinction in the Opera Studies and Artist Diploma programmes at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. This year, Catherine takes on the role of Annina in Scottish Opera's *La traviata*, which opens the 2017/18 Season, and goes on the road with *Opera Highlights* tour next spring.

**Samuel Bordoli**, Composer in Residence, is creating a new work entitled *Wings* for *Opera Highlights* which will have its world premiere in September. Samuel began composing and conducting at an early age, with his first orchestral work performed at the Bedford Corn Exchange when he was aged sixteen. Samuel held the Mendelssohn Scholarship and the Manson Fellowship at the Royal Academy of Music and was mentored by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies for nine years after studying with him at Dartington International Summer School. He went on to gain a BMus (Hons) at Birmingham Conservatoire. BBC Radio 3, BBC World Service and ITV News have broadcast his work and Samuel was the first composer to create site-specific compositions for Monument and Tower Bridge in London when his Live Music Sculptures were featured in the City of London Festival in 2012. Other collaborations include creating an opera to be performed on the Caledonian sleeper train between London and Aberdeen with Tête à Tête and Sound Scotland.

Baritone **Alexey Gusev** is from Rostov-On-Don in Russia and graduated from the Rostov State Conservatoire with a degree in Voice, Opera and Concert Singing. He joined the Rostov State Opera and Ballet Theatre as principal baritone, where he remained for seven years. In 2013-14, Alexey sang principal roles for the Astrakhan State Theatre of Opera and Ballet before taking up a scholarship at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and made his debut in Scotland as Napoleon and Andrey Bolkonsky in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. Alexey is one of this Autumn's *Opera Highlights* cast members and will perform in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta* in The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert in October. He will also perform in the Company's productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos* and *Eugene Onegin* in Spring 2018.

Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Emerging Artist **Patrick Milne** is the Emerging Artist Repetiteur and will be Music Director and pianist on the Spring dates of Scottish Opera's *Opera Highlights* tour, which travels to smaller, more remote venues around Scotland. A pianist and conductor with a particular interest in opera, he is about to complete his masters at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama having previously graduated from Clare College Cambridge with a Double First in Music. During his studies at Cambridge, Patrick held an Instrumental Award, won both the main concerto competitions and formed the Alba Orchestra.

As a prize-winning pianist at the Royal College of Music Junior Department, Patrick has performed as a soloist and as a collaborative pianist in venues such as Barbican Concert Hall and Cadogan Hall. Since graduating, Patrick has studied on the repetiteur course at the Solti

Accademia in Venice and has worked as Assistant Conductor and Repetiteur for a number of opera companies including three seasons at Grange Park Opera, where he was Assistant Conductor for *Tosca*, *Jenufa*, *La Fanciulla del West* and *Eugene Onegin*.

Elizabeth Salvesen Costume Trainee **Ellen Murgatroyd** trained at The University of Northampton, where she was awarded distinction in the Foundation Diploma in Art and Design, and at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, where she graduated with a 2.1 BA (Hons) in Costume Construction. She has worked at The Royal and Derngate in Northampton on productions including *The Grapes of Wrath* and *The Addams Family* and at Garsington Opera. She also completed an internship at Glyndebourne. With a passion for historical garments, Ellen will work on Scottish Opera's Season 2017/18 productions in the Costume Department, headed by John Liddell.

Having just completed his final year at the Royal Academy of Music, baritone **Alex Otterburn** recently performed the role of Eddy in Mark Anthony Turnage's *Greek*, a co-production between Scottish Opera and Opera Ventures which opened at Edinburgh International Festival. Alex gained a first class degree in Economics from the University of Manchester before embarking on his studies at the DIT Conservatory in Dublin. A 2014 winner of the International Opera Awards bursary, the following year he made his European concert debut as Curio (*Giulio Cesare*) at the Concertgebouw with the Symphonie Atlantique and as Schaunard in *La bohème* with the Lyric Opera in Ireland. This Season, Alex will perform in Scottish Opera's productions of *La traviata* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* as well as reprising his role in *Greek* at Theatre Royal Glasgow next year.

Lithuanian mezzo-soprano **Laura Zigmantaite** studied at the Academy of Music and Theatre of Lithuania, the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio, London. Despite being at an early stage in her career, Laura has already performed numerous roles including Valetto in *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, The Third Lady in *The Magic Flute* and Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro*. She won first prize at the Giovanni Musicisti competition in Italy, the Isabel Jay Prize and the Mozart Singing Competition. This Season at Scottish Opera, Laura will perform the roles of Flora Bervoix in *La traviata*, Dryad in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and sing in The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert performance of *Iolanta*.

The Emerging Artists singers will perform two recitals, at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in December and at the University of Glasgow Concert Hall in January.

The Emerging Artists are supported by The Robertson Trust, The John Mather Charitable Trust, The Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, Elizabeth Salvesen and Scottish Opera's Emerging Artist Benefactors.

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

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**PHOTO:** The attached photo shows the 2017/18 Scottish Opera Emerging Artists (clockwise from left) Alexey Gusev, Patrick Milne, Ellen Murgatroyd, Alex Otterburn, Catherine Backhouse, Laura Zigmantaite and Samuel Bordoli. Photo credit: Christina Riley.

#### Performance Diary

**Fri 8 December, 1pm**  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

**Thu 11 Jan, 1.10pm**  
University of Glasgow Concert Hall

#### 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 *Unwrapped* taster sessions.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



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