

20 September 2017

OPERA UNDER CANVAS WITH CAST OF UP TO 200 HEADS TO PAISLEY PARK

Paisley has been chosen as the site for Scottish Opera's production of Ruggero Leoncavallo's opera *Pagliacci (The Clowns)* in July 2018. The performances will take place at the city's Seedhill Playing Fields in a huge tented structure, and Scottish Opera is inviting local people from across Renfrewshire and beyond to be part of the performing company of up to two hundred.

Pagliacci tells the story of Canio, the leader of a troupe of travelling players, who discovers his wife Nedda is having an affair. His jealousy erupts before an unsuspecting audience, as the play-within-a-play takes a tragic turn.

Scottish Opera's Music Director **Stuart Stratford** will conduct and **Bill Bankes-Jones**, founder of *Tête à Tête* Opera, will direct the promenade production, which is being specially created to be staged outwith the walls of Scottish Opera's usual theatre venues.

Open to everyone aged 16 and over who enjoys singing, dance or drama or who would like to learn a new skill, those interested are invited to attend one of four taster events at Scottish Opera's Silver Cloud Studio in Hillington in November. No previous performance experience is needed and those who take part will be right in the middle of the action, performing alongside The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, international soloists and a professional chorus. The Company also wants to hear from existing theatrical, musical, gymnastic, cheer-leading or sporting groups to be part of the carnival-like setting which will be created for the show.

The November taster sessions will be followed by an introductory weekend in January and weekly rehearsals for the landmark immersive production will begin in early March. The performances of *Pagliacci (The Clowns)* will be on 26, 28 and 29 July in Paisley, which has been shortlisted for UK City of Culture in 2021.

Former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Nadine Livingston** (*La bohème*, 2017) sings the role of Nedda. Making his Scottish Opera debut, Trinidadian tenor **Ronald Samm** will sing the role of her husband Canio. **Robert Hayward** (*Bluebeard's Castle*, 2017) will return to the Scottish Opera stage as Tonio, the fool.

Stuart Stratford said: 'Sometimes the best place to perform a piece is outside the theatre. An opera like *Pagliacci* is crying out for a different approach – I can't think of a better way to present it, and to capture its energy, than with hundreds of performers from all walks of life.'

Alex Reedijk, Scottish Opera's General Director said: 'Since Stuart Stratford began his tenure at Scottish Opera as Music Director, he has been particularly keen to do a site-specific opera so I am thrilled we are coming to Paisley with what promises to be a spectacular production of *Pagliacci*. We are looking forward to getting local people involved in this exciting event – you don't need to have any experience to take part, just lots of enthusiasm!'

Bill Bankes-Jones added: 'I'm absolutely thrilled to be part of this pioneering project, and can't think of anywhere better than Paisley to stage *Pagliacci* in conjunction with the formidable forces of Scottish Opera. Creating a world where some performers visit a community mid-festival will be magical in Paisley, with its huge cultural heritage and the wonderful Sma' Shot Day to trigger our imaginations. I can't wait to see how Paisley and Scottish Opera collaborate and inspire each other through this project.'

Paisley 2021 bid director **Jean Cameron** said: 'We are thrilled Scottish Opera is bringing this production to Paisley next year. Paisley's bid to be UK City of Culture 2021 aims to bring some of the finest artists from Scotland and beyond to Paisley to work with our homegrown talent and for our local audiences to enjoy. We have some fantastic choirs here in Paisley - at the last count there were 26 - and I am sure they will relish the chance to be part of this amazing production of one of the world's best-loved operas. At the same time, we are excited at the chance to make use of a site which has never hosted anything of this kind – our bid aims to use every corner of Paisley to deliver the benefits of culture to those who stand to gain most, and this is a wonderful way to explore how that will work.'

Those who wish to find out more or take part in the production should contact Donna Macpherson: donna.macpherson@scottishopera.org.uk or 0141 332 9559.

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

Community Taster Sessions

Silver Cloud Studio, North Point, Unit 20, 37 Gordon Avenue, Hillington Park, G52 4TG

Mon 20 Nov, 7-9pm

Tue 21 Nov, 2-4pm

Wed 22 Nov, 7-9pm

Thu 23 Nov, 7-9pm

Performance Diary

Seedhill Playing Fields, Paisley

Thu 26 July, 7pm

Sat 28 July, 7pm

Sun 29 July, 3pm

Notes to Editors

Stuart Stratford's biography:

Stuart was appointed Music Director of Scottish Opera from 1 June 2015.

Stuart Stratford 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 has given the world staged premiere of *The Maiden in the Tower* (Sibelius) and the UK staged premiere of *Kashchei the Immortal* (Rimsky-Korsakov).

He is 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, adult learning, 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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