

16 April 2019

OPERAVISION TO STREAM FULL PERFORMANCE OF SCOTTISH OPERA'S *ANTHROPOCENE* IN MAY

Anthropocene, the acclaimed new work commissioned by Scottish Opera from composer **Stuart MacRae** and librettist **Louise Welsh**, will be available to watch on OperaVision from May.

Directed by **Matthew Richardson**, designed by **Samal Blak** and conducted by Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford**, *Anthropocene* had its world premiere in January at Theatre Royal Glasgow, and tells the story of an expeditionary team of scientists who become trapped in the frozen Arctic wastelands.

The film of *Anthropocene*, directed for OperaVision by **Jonathan Haswell** and produced by **Andrew Lockyer**, was made at a performance at London's Hackney Empire, on 9 February. The full performance will be available to view worldwide on the free streaming platform from 17 May to 17 November, and is the first time a Scottish Opera production has been featured on OperaVision.

Launched in 2017, OperaVision – curated by Opera Europa, the European association of opera companies and festivals - streams performances from all over the world, allowing viewers to watch productions from the greatest European opera houses from the comfort of their own home. As well as full-length performances shown with subtitles, it features extracts, interviews and behind the scenes footage.

Anthropocene's superb ensemble cast includes former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Jennifer France** (*Ariadne auf Naxos* 2018), Scottish soprano **Jeni Bern** and **Stephen Gadd** (*Rigoletto* 2018.) They are joined by **Benedict Nelson** (*The Burning Fiery Furnace* 2018), **Mark Le Brocq**, **Paul Whelan**, **Anthony Gregory** and **Sarah Champion** (*Opera Highlights* 2018).

Anthropocene is the fourth collaboration between MacRae and Welsh, a fruitful partnership initially born of Scottish Opera's *Five: 15 Opera Made in Scotland* series, which paired composers and librettists to create five 15-minute operas. The composer-librettist team went on to create *Remembrance Day* in 2009, *Ghost Patrol* in 2012, which won a South Bank Sky Arts Award and was nominated for an Olivier Award, and 2016's *The Devil Inside*, based on a short story by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Inverness-born MacRae's work has been performed at the Royal Opera House and Edinburgh International Festival, and by ensembles including Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Hebrides Ensemble. He is currently Composer in Association at Lammermuir Festival.

A Professor of Creative Writing at University of Glasgow, Welsh is the author of a number of popular novels including award-winning *The Cutting Room* and *Plague Times Trilogy*.

Scottish Opera General Director **Alex Reedijk** said: 'This film of *Anthropocene* by OperaVision is a very important first for Scottish Opera. Performing at Hackney Empire was a double win for us, as it brought *Anthropocene* to a London audience and, through this film shot there, allows us to introduce this exciting new work to an international audience. It's a great opportunity to show off the incredible work of Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh, who are such an important part of Scottish Opera's history, as well as the talented cast and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.'

Nicholas Payne, Opera Europa Director said: '*Anthropocene* grabbed me from the start and held me throughout with the twists and changes of its riveting story. Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh skilfully deploy music and words to create tension. They do not preach to us in the audience, but we are compelled to reflect on its relevance to our contemporary world. Chilling!'

Anthropocene is available to watch from 17 May at <https://operavision.eu/en>

Anthropocene is supported by John S. Cohen Foundation, RVW Trust and Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle.

Cast List

Ice	Jennifer France
Professor Prentice	Jeni Bern
Charles	Stephen Gadd
Miles	Benedict Nelson
Harry King	Mark Le Brocq
Captain Ross	Paul Whelan
Vasco	Anthony Gregory
Daisy	Sarah Champion

Anthropocene Creative Team

Conductor	Stuart Stratford
Director	Matthew Richardson
Set and Costume Designer	Samal Blak
Lighting Designer	Matthew Richardson
Movement Director	Kally Lloyd-Jones
Associate Lighting Director	Zoe Spurr

OperaVision Creative Team

Director	Jonathan Haswell
Producer	Andrew Lockyer

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Notes to Editors

Stuart MacRae

Born in Inverness in 1976, Stuart MacRae has established himself as one of the most distinctive composers working today, writing music of elemental power and emotional subtlety. Equally at home writing opera, orchestral music, chamber music and music for choirs, his work takes listeners on a journey through perceptions of nature, striking imagery and the landscape of human emotion.

His numerous stage works range from *Echo and Narcissus*, a dance-opera premiered at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in 2007, through to 2015's critically acclaimed *The Devil Inside* for Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales. *Ghost Patrol*, written in collaboration with writer Louise Welsh, won the 2013 South Bank Sky Arts Award for Opera and was shortlisted for an Olivier Award.

From 1999-2003, he was Composer in Association at the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and his works have been performed throughout Europe with groups including Orchestre National de Lyon, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, Hungarian Radio Symphony, BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, London Sinfonietta, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, Scottish Ensemble, Hebrides Ensemble and Britten Sinfonia, by conductors including Martyn Brabbins, Oliver Knussen, Jan-Latham Koenig, Susanna Malkki, David Robertson, Clark Rundell, Donald Runnicles, John Storgårds and Ilan Volkov.

Numerous of his works have been performed at the Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms, including his 2001 Violin Concerto which had its world premiere at the BBC Proms and has been performed by Tasmin Little, Christian Tetzlaff and Tedi Papavrami.

His music has been recorded for NMC, Black Box, Delphian, Kairos and the London Sinfonietta's own label. Recent works include *Cantata* (2016) for the Choir of Gonville and Caius College Cambridge, *Piano Sonata No.2* (2016) for Simon Smith, and *Sunrises* (2017) for the Gould Piano Trio. From 2017, he is Composer in Residence at the Lammermuir Festival, where he premiered a new commission in September 2018.

Louise Welsh

Louise Welsh works in several forms including novels, short stories, opera libretti, radio, performance and sound art. She has written eight novels, most recently *Plague Times Trilogy*, a series of books exploring a contemporary pandemic. She has written many short stories and articles and is editor of *Ghost: One Hundred Stories to Read with the Lights On* (2016).

Louise has collaborated on four operas with the composer Stuart MacRae. She wrote the libretto for the opera *Ghost Patrol*, a co-production between Scottish Opera and Music Theatre Wales, which premiered at 2012's Edinburgh Festival. The production won a Southbank Sky Arts Award and was shortlisted for an Olivier Award. She collaborated again with MacRae on *The Devil Inside*, an opera inspired by Robert Louis Stevenson's short story *The Bottle Imp*. The opera toured Britain in 2016 and had its Canadian premiere in Toronto with Tapestry Opera.

Louise was writer in residence for The University of Glasgow and Glasgow School of Art from November 2010 to April 2012. She has received several awards and international fellowships, including a Doctor of Arts from Edinburgh Napier University and an honorary fellowship from the University of Iowa's International Writing Program. She was a University of Otago Scottish Writers' Fellow at Pah Homestead, New Zealand (2016).

Louise was co-founder and director of the Empire Café (with Jude Barber of Collective Architecture), an award winning, multi-disciplinary exploration of Scotland's relationship with the North Atlantic slave trade. The project was included in the City of Glasgow's 2014 Commonwealth Games Cultural Programme. It involved thirty-six events over nine days and attracted in the region of four thousand visitors.

A frequent broadcaster, she has written and presented radio features on many topics including Scottish history, gothic, Robert Louis Stevenson and contemporary art.

Louise's first novel *The Cutting Room* was 'Most Inspiring Saltire First Book Award' winner at the Saltire Literary Awards, marking the 30th anniversary of this category.

Louise is Professor of Creative Writing at University of Glasgow and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature @louisewelsh00

OperaVision

OperaVision is the title of a new project for opera in Europe in the digital environment. Opera Vision offers a free-view, online, richly diverse curated season of European opera in partnership with 30 opera houses from 18 countries. OperaVision has a specific new emphasis on attracting and cultivating young, emerging audiences, celebrating Europe's cultural heritage and developing opera for the future.

OperaVision builds on the successes of The Opera Platform (TOP), initiated in autumn 2014 and co-funded by the European Union's Creative Europe Programme as the European Opera Digital Project. Opera Europa (the leading service organisation for professional opera companies and festivals throughout Europe) developed its first phase in partnership with the cultural broadcaster ARTE and 15 contributing opera houses selected from 12 European countries. TOP built a reputation for the quality of its programming and gained a large international audience. During its first 18 months online, video viewing figures exceeded 2 million: 80% of viewers from Europe, 10% from North America and 10% from the rest of the world. Its success in reaching audiences with a quality product was recognised by winning the Accessibility Prize at the International Opera Awards in May 2016. The project played an important role in building capacity and sharing expertise in digital technology and cost-effective solutions – all with the purpose of widening access to the European art of opera.

Launched in October 2017, OperaVision offers a platform with enriched content drawn from a more diverse partnership; the number of theatre partners has doubled to 30, and 60% of partners are new. The content is more varied (full-length and short-form), inclusive (musical theatre in many forms) and regular (an average of two live streams per month). The platform focuses on reaching younger audiences, celebrating European cultural heritage, reinventing opera for today and making an opera streaming platform self-sustainable long-term. Harnessing ever-evolving technology, OperaVision will reach deeper into the lives of our citizens and promote European cultural values to the world.

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; complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production; and the Achievement in Opera Award at the 2017 UK Theatre Awards for Sir David McVicar's production of Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. 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, 2016's *The Devil Inside* and 2019's *Anthropocene* by Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh. In 2018, the Company made its US debut with *BambinO* at the Metropolitan Opera New York, and returned to the city's Brooklyn Academy of Music with *Greek* in December.

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 9,000 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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