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##### Press Release

24 November 2021

**SCOTTISH opera’s rescheduled**

**new production of *a midsummer night’s dream***

**BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN opens in february**

A new production of Benjamin Britten’s atmospheric *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, directed by **Dominic Hill**, Artistic Director of Citizens Theatre, opens with three performances at Theatre Royal Glasgow on February 22, before transferring to Festival Theatre Edinburgh for a further three performances. This show was originally due to be performed in March 2020.

Dominic, who last directed Verdi’s *Macbeth* for Scottish Opera in 2014, returns to the Company to bring his Shakespearean expertise in the telling of this tale of four lovers lost in the woods, fairies, magic and comedy, in an otherworldly mix of imagination and reality.

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts a dynamic cast that includes Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, **Catriona Hewitson** as Tytania, widely praised for her performances in the Company’s recent productions of *The Gondoliers, Utopia, Limited,* Così fan tutte and L’elisir d’amore, and **David Shipley** (*Rigoletto*2018), as Bottom, alongside internationally acclaimed countertenor **Lawrence Zazzo** as Oberon. Also in the cast are Scottish tenor and broadcaster, **Jamie MacDougall** (*Falstaff* 2021); former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Elgan Llŷr Thomas** (*Falstaff* 2021); **Dingle Yandell** (*Tosca* 2019); **Jonathan McGovern** (*The Telephone* 2020)and 2021/22 Emerging Artists, **Lea Shaw** (*Opera Highlights* 2021) and **Glen Cunningham** (*Utopia, Limited* 2021). They are joined by a children’s chorus, who range in age from nine to 13, and are from all over Scotland, including Glasgow, the Borders and Fife.

Set in a post-war world, designs for the production are by **Tom Piper**, famed for the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* installation at the Tower of London. It also features puppetry by **Rachael Canning**, an award-winning set, costume and puppetry designer/ director for theatre, who has previously worked with companies including Citizens Theatre, Northern Ballet and The Globe Theatre.

Director **Dominic Hill** said: ‘We were all devastated last year to have to stop rehearsals for this production, so I am delighted to be able to return to this wonderful opera to finally bring it to the stage. We discovered such joy, playfulness and passion in rehearsals last year which I hope with our wonderful new cast will allow us to finish the journey.’

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** added: ‘From the glistening glissandi of the strings to the pungent aroma of the solo trombone, it is easy to understand why *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is viewed as a masterclass in orchestration and economy of gesture. With such minimal material, Britten can summon the mystery of the forest, effortlessly transition into the magic realm of Oberon and then collapse into the bustle and organised chaos of the amateur players. All of the vocal writing is exquisitely crafted, and it is true to say that the score is held dear by all those who have the fortune to bring this life affirming comedy to the stage.’

Audience members with a visual impairment can enjoy the full opera experience at audio-described performances, which have a live commentary describing the action on stage without compromising the music.

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is supported by Scottish Opera’s Alexander Gibson Circle.

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* cast list

Oberon **Lawrence Zazzo**

Tytania **Catriona Hewitson\***

Hippolyta  **Annie Reilly**

Theseus **Lancelot Nomura**

Lysander **Elgan Llŷr Thomas**

Demetrius **Jonathan McGovern**

Hermia **Lea Shaw\***

Helena **Charlie Drummond**

Bottom **David Shipley**

Quince  **John Molloy**

Flute **Glen Cunningham\***

Snug **Dingle Yandell**

Snout  **Jamie MacDougall**

Starveling **Arthur Bruce**

\* Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2021/22

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* creative team

Conductor **Stuart Stratford**

Director **Dominic Hill**

Set & Costume Designer  **Tom Piper**

Lighting Designer **Lizzie Powell**

Movement Director **Kally-Lloyd Jones**

Puppet Design and Direction **Rachael Canning**

Performance Diary

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

Tuesday 22 February, 7.15pm

Thursday 24 February, 7.15pm

Saturday 26 February, 7.15pm (Audio described performance)

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

Tuesday 1 March, 7.15pm

Thursday 3 March, 7.15pm

Saturday 5 March, 7.15pm (Audio described performance)

-ENDS-

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

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

Notes to Editors

All productions are created and performed in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

The Company’s Opera on Screen productions are available to watch at: www.scottishopera.org.uk/what-s-on/opera-on-screen/.

The collection includes Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore*, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, *Opera Highlights*, Janáček’s *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, Menotti’s *The Telephone* and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland.

The Company's performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly-commissioned world premieres, working in collaboration with the world's finest singers and creatives, alongside The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards and a Herald Angel, as well as a 2020 RPS Award. In 2021 the Company returned to live audiences with Sir David McVicar’s new production of Verdi’s *Falstaff* performed in Glasgow and at Edinburgh International Festival.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland, from the largest-scale theatres to the smallest of rural venues, to ensure we are within reach of as many of our country's very dispersed population as possible. Our specially-adapted 40-foot long trailer brings ‘Pop-up Opera’ performances to thousands of people each year in a range of inspiring and unexpected community locations. In the Summer of 2021 the Company performed over 200 shows of its Pop-up Opera Roadshow, to socially distanced audiences of over 8000. This represents the most extensive touring programme of any opera company in Europe and is a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education and Outreach programme, which celebrates 50 years in 2021, includes an annual Primary Schools Tour, bringing upper primary-aged children the opportunity to perform their own specially-commissioned piece, alongside three professional singers. Around 120 schools and 9,000 pupils take part each year.

Scottish Opera aims to be inclusive and affordable through availability of free and cheap tickets, as well as performances offering audio description, and specially-devised shorter access performances.

Scottish Opera is core funded by The Scottish Government

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