



Scottish
Opera



Back in Business

Welcome

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company. Scottish Opera's mission is to entertain, inspire, surprise, educate, challenge, and delight audiences old and new by delivering high quality, powerful opera throughout Scotland, the rest of the UK, and internationally. The Company was founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson.

The inaugural productions of *Madama Butterfly* and *Pelléas and Mélisande* at the King's Theatre in Glasgow set the artistic tone for the Company's future, one that placed repertoire staples next to daring, under-explored works. In 1974, Scottish Opera purchased the Theatre Royal Glasgow from STV, which reopened in 1975 as Scotland's first national opera house. The Orchestra of Scottish Opera was founded in 1980.

The Company gives regular mainstage performances in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Inverness. These productions are fully-staged, complete works from the beginning of the operatic canon to world premieres. All of these performances, regardless of language, are subtitled in the theatre, and accessible and audio-described performances give all audiences a chance to experience opera.

The Company also tours small-scale productions to communities across Scotland. In 1971, it became the first

European opera company to establish an education department. It now runs an extensive education and outreach programme for people of all ages, social backgrounds, and abilities that contributes to the development of personal creativity, interest in opera, and wellbeing.

Scottish Opera is one of five National Performing Companies funded directly by the Scottish Government. It also attracts significant support from individuals, trusts, and the private sector alongside earned income from ticket sales, production hire, transport, and manufacturing.

Scottish Opera takes its role as a National Performing Company and the only full-time, professional opera company in Scotland very seriously. It is committed to playing a leading role in supporting and developing the creation, performance, and enjoyment of opera across the country; demonstrating Scotland's operatic credentials to the rest of the UK and internationally; and supporting the development of young artists. It contributes significantly to Scotland's cultural ecology and industry, retaining artists, creatives, artisans, and other performance-related professionals in Scotland through employment and training opportunities.

Chair's Statement

The global pandemic continued to pose significant challenges for Scottish Opera during this Financial Year. However, the Company was bold and adventurous in leaning into the pandemic to make the most of the situation. Filming techniques were finessed, and ever-changing lockdown levels were carefully navigated to make sure performances were ready just in time for the lifting of restrictions. The entire Company was able to remain match fit, ready for the return to theatres.

As huge fans of live performance, it was a relief to be back in the Company's regular theatres from the autumn. Prior to that, Scottish Opera was once again nimble in responding to the lifting of restrictions and put on a fantastic run of events called Live at No.40 in the car park at Edington Street, Glasgow. There were six of performances of Verdi's *Falstaff*, three orchestra concerts, and performances of Kurt Weill's *The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken* by the Scottish Opera Young Company. The Company shared the space to enable concerts from The Scottish Ensemble and a run of performances from The Citizens Theatre of Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*. This was a huge effort from the team and I congratulate everyone involved – staff, creatives, and audiences – for their willingness, quick thinking, and excellent collaboration to make these performances happen.

Investing in and developing new talent has remained at the heart of Scottish Opera's vision despite the pandemic. The 2021/22 Emerging Artists truly embedded themselves within Scottish Opera, appearing in main Company performances throughout the year. This included leading roles in *The Gondoliers*; *Utopia, Limited*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and *Mavra*. They, and Emerging Artists from previous seasons, also brought live music back to many of Scotland's communities with a hugely successful *Opera Highlights* tour.

We remain grateful to the Scottish Government for its continued support and commitment to core funding. In particular, we are indebted to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon for taking the time to lend her support in bringing audiences back to cultural events, which was communicated through meeting many of our staff on a tour of our production studios in February.

I cannot thank our supporters enough – audiences, trusts, foundations, businesses, and individual donors – for everything they have done to support Scottish Opera through these hugely challenging times. Your support has been constant and the commitment you make is never taken for granted by staff and board.

The Board meets quarterly, supported by more frequent meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. During the year, we were sad to see John McCormick and Alison Brimelow retire but were delighted to welcome Marcus Cheng as a Director to the Board.

We recognise that there are many external influences at play. Costs are rising significantly due to fluctuations in materials, goods, and energy prices. Some resources are proving to be scarce, leading to an increase in production time. However, with opera houses across the globe re-opening, opportunities to hire productions have increased. Scottish Opera's productions head to cities including Madrid, Santa Fe, and Los Angeles next season. Audiences are smaller than they were pre-pandemic, and the size of the challenge to help people get back into the habit of attending productions is not to be underestimated.

The Board and Senior Management Team have demonstrated expert leadership, determination, resilience, and enthusiasm, and for this I extend my gratitude. The commitment and effort of the entire Scottish Opera team to pivot during the pandemic is to be applauded.

Peter Lawson
Chair of Scottish Opera

The Gondoliers
2021



2021/22 Summary

Despite a challenging start to the financial year, by its end Scottish Opera was back in the business of creating high-quality opera throughout Scotland. The Covid-19 pandemic restricted activity in Spring 2021 with lockdowns, but theatres were able to reopen with a limit of 400 people in August. The Company leapt at this opportunity to present a fully-staged outdoor opera which then moved indoors for the Edinburgh International Festival. By October, the Company was able to present a full-scale mainstage tour to theatres across the country. Omicron caused cancellations of some Education & Outreach activities in December and January, but despite the interruptions the resulting year was a strong one, with no cancelled fully-staged operas, touring operas, or operas in concert and a warm audience reception after the long break.

This was Music Director Stuart Stratford's sixth year with Scottish Opera. His quick responses to changing circumstances contributed to the Season's success, which was achieved by all with great energy and enthusiasm. Highlights included turning performances into films, adapting for outdoors, and bringing passion to Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* when finally presented in February 2022. There were also successful festival collaborations and broadcasts on BBC Radio Scotland.



34,735

people in Scotland saw a live performance during the year

11,014

people saw Pop-up Opera at 192 performances

176

countries experienced our digital offerings, reaching 500,000 people internationally

26

performances in the first year of Live at No.40

12

sell-out performances of *Falstaff*— outdoors at Live at No.40 and indoors at the Festival Theatre Edinburgh as part of EIF

5

new opera films released, with 128,490 views on YouTube

4

five-star reviews of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which opened after a two-year delay due to Covid

3

festival collaborations with Edinburgh International, Lammermuir, and Perth

1

tour to Hackney Empire, London with *The Gondoliers* and *Utopia, Limited*

Performances

The Company's creative and marketing teams continued to develop filming skills and made the most of outdoor performances. Scottish Opera's supporters have remained loyal and audiences have been appreciative of the Company's adaptability.

The year started with the launch of two new films, *Live in South Lanarkshire* and Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. The latter received critical acclaim and was watched by over 11,500 people, with *The National* praising its 'sharp editing' which helped it feel 'live'. Like the 2020/21 *On Screen* films, these operas remain online for audiences around the world.

Filmed at Theatre Royal Glasgow, *L'elisir* provided an additional opportunity to engage the full Scottish Opera team including cast, chorus, and orchestra. Venue staff also were employed, helping keep people fresh for when theatres were able to re-open.

'What a beautiful performance! No wonder everyone's in love with Adina – Catriona Hewitson is stunning! What voice and technique in one so young. Thank you all for this lovely experience.'

Audience member

'Thank you so much for this absolutely delightful production – congratulations to everyone involved.'

Audience member

'...an interpretation that fizzes with musical life'

The Stage

'a thoroughly enjoyable two hours'

The National



The Stage



The National

L'elisir d'amore
2021



When restrictions lifted in Summer 2021, everyone was ready for a six-show run of Verdi's *Falstaff* directed by Sir David McVicar under a canopy in Scottish Opera's Edington Street car park. The performances were a sell-out for socially distanced audiences and received much acclaim, including 5-star reviews, from audiences and critics. The praise cited both the production itself and the fact that these performances went on in uncertain conditions.

Falstaff then transferred to Edinburgh's Festival Theatre as part of the 2021 Edinburgh International Festival. This was the first Scottish Opera indoor performance to take place as restrictions lifted, albeit with a limited audience number of 400. Lastly, the production was a collaboration with Santa Fe Opera, ensuring another life for the piece and continuing Scottish Opera's commitment to collaboration with the world's leading opera houses.

'It may be in a car park but Scottish Opera's *Falstaff* is a five-star triumph'

The Herald

'The most exciting *Falstaff* I have seen in over 50 years'

Edinburgh Music Review



The Herald



The Scotsman



Bachtrack



The Guardian



The Times



The Stage



Falstaff
2021



The Pop-up Opera tour was back on the road, this time with two curtain-sided trailers reaching an audience of over 11,000 over 192 performances across 46 locations. Places visited included the Isle of Lewis, Aberdeenshire, Wigton, Hawick, and many locations in between.

Five Gilbert and Sullivan operas were miniaturised for the tour, resulting in 'A Little Bit of' *The Gondoliers*, *The Mikado*, *Iolanthe*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *HMS Pinafore*. *The Undersea World of Bubble McBea*, an interactive adventure for children in Primary 1 to 3, visited ten primary schools, raising awareness of sea pollution in the run up to COP26 in Glasgow.

'I thought it delightful. Quality of singing, musical accompaniment and costume as well as the excellent narrator, made it a joyful experience.'

Audience member

'It was perfect. Our whole family, children and adults alike were entranced from the beginning to the end.'

Audience member



The Undersea World
of Bubble McBea
2021



As venues around the country started to open up, *Opera Highlights* was straight out on tour, taking in 11 venues in Autumn 2021 and a further 18 in Spring 2022. Each leg of the tour presented a separate programme of music and directorial concept. This was a highly successful tour, with many sell-out performances and positive feedback.

Locations included Ballachulish, Stornoway, Dunoon, Wick, Barra, Ardfern, Lockerbie, and Cumbernauld. Scottish Opera 2021/22 Emerging Artists – mezzo-soprano Lea Shaw and tenor Glen Cunningham – and Scottish Opera 2020/21 Emerging Artists – mezzo-soprano Margo Arsane and tenor Shengzhi Ren – all took part in the tour which was supported by The Friends of Scottish Opera and JTH Charitable Trust.

‘What an absolute treat to hear world class singers weave their story with such a thrilling, varied musical programme. As someone fairly new to opera I was absolutely captivated! Please come again!’

Audience member in Troon, 2022

‘It was a wonderful show, and the privilege of experiencing such international quality talent in a very intimate location was fantastic.’

Audience member in Craginish, 2022



ScotsGay Arts



The Herald

Opera Highlights
2022

The first fully-indoors mainscale production since the pandemic, of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, was presented in the autumn at the Theatre Royal Glasgow, Edinburgh Festival Theatre, and Eden Court Inverness. This co-production with D'Oyly Carte Opera and State Opera South Australia was directed by Stuart Maunder.

Audiences were still cautious about returning, so the performance was also captured on film live from Edinburgh Festival Theatre. As a result, 243,000 people across the UK viewed the film on BBC iPlayer during the week of release (Easter Sunday, April 2022).

Concert performances of the Gilbert and Sullivan rarity *Utopia, Limited* were presented alongside *The Gondoliers* to strong reviews. At the very end of the financial year, these two Gilbert and Sullivan performances went to the Hackney Empire in London to a further warm reception.

'The orchestra and chorus, under conductor Derek Clark's no-nonsense direction, are colourful and responsive'

The Scotsman on *The Gondoliers*

'Scottish Opera's staging of G&S's caper bursts with energy and boasts a cracking chorus and choreography'

The Telegraph on *The Gondoliers*

'Clark conducts with admirable grace and wit'

The Guardian on *Utopia, Limited*



The Stage



Bachtrack



The Times



The Scotsman



The Herald

The Gondoliers
2021

After an almost two-year delay due to the pandemic, Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* directed by Dominic Hill was presented in Edinburgh and Glasgow to larger audiences and overwhelmingly positive reviews. The Glasgow audience comprised 26% taking advantage of the £10 Under 26 tickets.

'The Orchestra of Scottish Opera reveal Britten's score in beautifully delineated detail'

The Guardian

'the makings of a classic'

The Stage



The Scotsman



The Stage



Bachtrack



The Guardian



The Times



The Observer



Education & Outreach

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a dramatic impact on the Company's award-winning education and outreach programme, as it could no longer provide for large sections of the communities it serves, in particular older adults and young children.

For the Autumn 2021 term, local authorities would not allow schools to have face-to-face sessions from visiting companies as Covid levels remained high; however, schools engaged with new, specially created online materials instead with almost 19,000 unique views of materials for *The Last Aliens*. Bookings were taken for Spring and Summer 2022 terms when the live Primary Schools Tour returned.

The Education & Outreach Department received anecdotal feedback from schools that the new materials created were extremely useful in helping the pupils learn the songs.

Due to relaxation of some Covid prevention protocols, some limited Disney Music in Schools activity involving blended learning (online sessions and some face to face workshops) was able to resume for the original five schools: Lawthorn in Irvine, Todholm in Paisley, East Plein in Stirling, Langlee in Galashiels, and St Anthony's

in Johnstone. Five new schools joined the programme in the autumn: Cleeves Primary School in Glasgow, St James Primary School in Renfrewshire, Edinbarnet Primary School in West Dunbartonshire, Hurlford Primary School in East Ayrshire, and Wemyss Bay Primary School in Inverclyde.

The programme, which continues for another year, builds skills and confidence in both pupils and teachers, encourages participation and collaboration, and leaves a sustainable arts legacy for years to come – especially in schools that are actively seeking greater engagement with the arts, especially schools within high Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation areas. Feedback from Head Teachers stated that, despite difficulties of accommodating visits within required Covid prevention measures, the benefits to pupils are so great it was crucial to maintain activity wherever possible.

Online materials were launched for *Meet the Brassketeers*, an educational project developed by three brass players from The Orchestra of Scottish Opera. This pack of lesson plans combining music and numeracy aimed at pupils aged 5 to 8 has been much loved.

The Last Aliens
2022

‘The concept is genius and the youngsters really love being involved... all the online resources make it extremely easy for a non-music teacher to deliver the content with ease.’

Teacher, Keith Primary School





Mr MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep 2021

Despite the outbreak of Omicron in December, Scottish Opera managed to perform 16 public and seven schools shows of *Mr MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep* to over 2,000 people. The festive musical adventure was created for children aged 3 to 7 and performed at the Company's Production Studios in Glasgow from 3 to 20 December. The 45-minute, family-friendly show immerses young audience in live music and interactive puppetry that encourages children to sing, dance, and get involved in the production.

Scottish Opera's project for those suffering from long Covid, *Breath Cycle*, ran two fully booked and warmly received 10-week sessions. More were planned for April 2022 and the following financial year.

‘This was my son’s first theatre experience and he was engaged throughout and loved it!’

Audience member at *Mr MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep*

There were several attempts to revive Dementia Friendly programmes, but on each occasion another outbreak of Covid paused efforts. Finally, the Memory Spinners programme restarted in Fife in September 2021, in collaboration with The Byre Theatre. .

Sweet Sounds in Wild Places was a series of free workshops led by Scottish Opera in partnership with The Abbotsford Trust and Live Borders. They helped build creative skills and increase self-confidence and self-expression through music, creative writing, film and photography to empower those who were struggling during lockdown. Forming part of the 250th anniversary celebrations of Sir Walter Scott, his novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* (better known through the opera *Lucia di Lammermoor*) was inspiration to explore issues such as loneliness and isolation, as well as the impact, for good and bad, that landscape and environment can have on mental health and well-being.

Both the Young Company and the Young Company Gateway have been lifelines for exceptional young Scottish talent. Despite several Covid cases in the Company during rehearsals, their production of Kurt Weill's *The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken* had two outdoor performances over Summer 2021. The Community Choir continued to meet weekly online and moved back to being in-person in early 2022 with an average attendance of 35. This proved to be a crucial piece of contact for all of the members.

‘What a crazy vibrant experience! It was a real treat to see everyone performing so enthusiastically and the design was a triumph!’

Audience member at *The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken*



The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken 2021



The Orchestra of Scottish Opera

The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, together with Music Director Stuart Stratford, was able to restart concert performances. There were three orchestral concerts during Live at No. 40 (mini outdoor Festival in the grounds of the production studios in Glasgow), two concert performances of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* at the Lammermuir Festival and Perth Concert Hall in September (giving the cast of 2020's filmed version a chance to perform for a live audience), and a special collection of the best of Puccini at Dundee's Caird Hall in December.

At the start of 2022, the finest young talent known as The National Opera Studio joined Scottish Opera for workshops, masterclasses, and a showcase performance with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera at the Theatre Royal Glasgow.

Stuart Stratford was able to return to his favourite Russian music back at Perth Concert Hall with a semi-staged double bill of Rachmaninov's *The Miserly Knight* and Stravinsky's *Mavra*.

'all the drama, intensity and passion were captured to the full'

The Courier on The Puccini Collection

'fine, nuanced accounts of these two very different scores'

The Guardian on *The Miserly Knight* / *Mavra*

★★★★★
The Guardian

★★★★★
ScotsGay Arts



The Miserly Knight /
Mavra
2022

Our Supporters and Donors

Income generated through fundraising for the year 2021/22 totalled £1,373,224. We are grateful to all of our donors, whose steadfast support helped us to navigate the transition from online only work, back to live performances and outreach projects. Special thanks are due to Dunard Fund, the Garfield Weston Foundation (Cultural Recovery Fund), and to the members of Scottish Opera's Syndicate, who provided significant support during a very challenging time. We are hugely grateful that our outdoor performances of Verdi's *Falstaff* were supported by those who gave to our Play a Supporting Role Appeal.

We are very fortunate to have 396 loyal and committed annual supporters giving through our Alexander Gibson Circle, Emerging Artists programme, Education Angels scheme, Music Director's Circle and the New Commissions Circle, and 980 Friends of Scottish Opera.

The grants we received from 17 Charitable Trusts and Foundations were important in helping us realise our artistic ambitions, support our Young Company and sustain vital projects such as Memory Spinners (for people with dementia and their loved ones), Breath Cycle II (for people with long Covid), and our Primary Schools Tour.

We also wish to thank the businesses including Baillie Gifford, Miller Samuel Hill Brown, NVT, and Capital Document Solutions that support our work with gifts in cash and in-kind.

The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust, funded through gifts in the wills of supporters over many years, continues to play a key role in supporting our work, continuing to receive legacies over the year.

It remains our intention that legacy gifts to the Company will be transferred to the Trust for investment, where careful stewardship means the gifts will continue to help Scottish Opera for generations to come. We are so grateful both to our supporters who have helped us by leaving a gift and those who have pledged to do so in the future through the Dame Janet Baker Circle.

Kirsten Howie
Director of Fundraising



Memory Spinners
2022

Our People

When not working, Scottish Opera continued to support staff via the furlough scheme until it was wound up in September 2021. Because of this, Scottish Opera spent £556,025 on additional staff costs including salary, pension, and national insurance costs, a portion of which was claimed back through the furlough scheme. The total number of people who benefitted in the financial year from the furlough scheme was 151.

Scottish Opera is committed to the principles of equal opportunities and equal treatment of all employees and artists. During the year, the Company consulted with all staff on multiple occasions in order to understand the challenges and create an action plan for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), in all areas including backstage, creative teams, and casting.

The Company received standstill funding in the 2022/23 budget announced by the Scottish Government in December 2021. The Company remains grateful for this continued support. While Scottish Opera is a strong going concern, the Company is experiencing pressure on cost of materials, goods, and energy along with pressure on artists and craftspeople leaving for higher paid jobs particularly in the film sector.

With inflation continuing to rise, the Company is yet to understand fully the impact of this on its ability to produce and present opera to the high quality standards that it historically achieves. As audiences explore their 'new ordinary', it is found that they are not all yet willing to return to indoor events, or are no longer able to travel in the evenings and this creates some uncertainty for future sales. Nonetheless, it is the Company's firm belief that a vibrant opera company in Scotland will play a more important role than ever for audiences and also in schools and community settings the length and breadth of the country.

Scottish Opera voluntarily carries out the Gender Pay Reporting in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 to cover the 2021/22 financial year. The full findings and data requirements can be found on the Scottish Opera website.

Scottish Opera is one of over 170 cultural organisations to have signed up to The Green Arts Initiative. This forms part of the Company's long-term commitment to reducing its environmental impact, which is an ongoing effort.

Financials and Fundraising

While normal activity slowly resumed over the course of the 2021/22 financial year, emerging from the pandemic and responding to security measures was a strain on resources compared to pre-pandemic years.

Scottish Opera is immensely grateful to the Scottish Government for their continued funding as well as the UK Government for the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS).

This financial support, as well as the generosity of supporters and the enthusiasm of ticket-buyers, allowed Scottish Opera to maintain staff and functions in a year when generating income through traditional productions and events remained a challenge while the new ordinary continues to be established.

Fundraising Income (in £)

Individuals	594,924
Major Gifts	441,000
Trust & Foundations	289,800
Corporate (incl in kind)	47,500
Legacy	28,977
Total	1,373,224

Income (in £)

Donations	8,825,490
Charitable Activities	1,326,562
Other Trading Activities	473,741
CJRS	652,277
Theatre Tax Credit	714,487
Total income	11,992,557

Expenditure (in £)

Main Scale and Concerts	9,246,767
Support Costs	926,373
Education	774,704
Fundraising	290,693
Small Scale Touring	279,860
Cost of Virus	556,025
Total	12,074,422

Thank you

I close this report by expressing my immense gratitude for the patience, dedication, and energy that the many skilled and creative people who choose to work with and for Scottish Opera have shown throughout this difficult time. We have had to make difficult decisions and create work differently, knowing our plans would likely change given the uncertainty in the changing legislative environment. I could not be more grateful for the resilience, flexibility, kindness, and determination shown by everyone who has been part of the Scottish Opera 'family' in the past year, particularly my senior team colleagues. I am extremely grateful for the years of hard work, loyalty and diligence that outgoing Director of Finance Judith Patrickson and HR Director Cathy Shaw demonstrated in over 35 years of service between them. I wish them both all the very best.

A huge thank you to all those who have engaged in our digital activity, to participants in our outreach, and those who were able to see us perform both outdoors and indoors as we resumed opera-making in full. Thank you for your courage in returning to our theatres, for the many messages of support encouragement, and crucially for all of the donations – regular ones as well as one-offs. Your patronage is a huge vote of confidence in our work and opera.

I look forward very much to being able to welcome each and every one of you back to our places of work and venues during the next financial year and hope you find something to enjoy among Scottish Opera's performances, videos, and outreach projects.

Alex Reedijk
General Director

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