

**Press Release**

24 March 2025

**ONE INNOVATIVE SET DESIGN UNITES THREE SCOTTISH OPERA PRODUCTIONS**

Scottish Opera presents an ambitious triptych of productions this summer united by a single innovative set design by **takis**.

Audiences will experience three distinct operatic worlds—the glamour of 1950s Manhattan, a modern-day courtroom, and the press office of Number 9 Downing Street—all brought to life on the same stage.

The three productions—Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow*, Gilbert & Sullivan's *Trial by Jury*, and the world premiere of Emma Jenkins and Toby Hession's *A Matter of Misconduct! —*showcase the versatility of takis' design work as it shifts from the glittering underworld of New York and Sicily's sun-drenched lemon groves for *The Merry Widow*, to a contemporary courtroom for *Trial by Jury*, and finally to the corridors of political power for *A Matter of Misconduct!*

*The Merry Widow* opens on 30 April at Theatre Royal Glasgow and tours to **Eden Court Inverness, Festival Theatre Edinburgh and His Majesty’s Theatre Aberdeen.** A co-production with **D’Oyly Carte Opera**and**Opera Holland Park, it also visits Opera Holland Park in June for five performances.**

Director**John Savournin**(Opera Highlights Spring 2022) updates Lehár’s will-they, won’t-they romance with lavish designs by **takis.** A new English translation by Savournin and **David Eaton** makes the opera’s wit sparkle.

Feisty, fabulous and filthy rich, Hanna Glawari is the merriest widow in New York, with a fortune in the bank, a lucrative lemon grove in Sicily, and a stampede of suitors vying for her attention. But money is power, and Mafioso Don Zeta recruits the many talents of wiseguy Danilo, the happiest bachelor in New York, to ensure Hanna’s millions don’t end up married to the wrong man, with license to use any means necessary. Little does Zeta know, however, that Hanna and Danilo have quite the history.

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford**conducts The Merry Widow for the first time, and the cast is led by **Paula Sides**(Candide 2022) and **Alex Otterburn** (Greek 2018) as Hanna and Danilo, with **Henry Waddington** (The Makropulos Affair 2025) as the powerful Don Zeta, **Rhian Lois** (*The Strauss Collection* 2025), as Valentina, **William Morgan** (*Marx in London!* 2024)as Camille de Rosillon and **Matthew Kellett** (making his Company debut) as Nicky Negus.

**John Savournin** said: ‘It's such a pleasure to be making a brand-new production of *The Merry Widow* — a lavish, musically luxurious and fun, night at the theatre — and I can't wait to share what we have created with Scottish Opera's audience.’

**takis** said:‘This production has been a delectably sumptuous journey into the world of *The Merry Widow*, sparkling with a refreshingly colourful take that transports us to a dangerous and risqué world.’

**In order to bring even more opera to Scottish audiences, *The Merry Widow* is presented alongside the sprightly double bill of a new production of Gilbert & Sullivan’s *Trial by Jury* (a co-production by** **Scottish Opera**, **D'Oyly Carte Opera** and **Opera Holland Park**), **directed by John Savournin, and the world premiere of Emma Jenkins and Toby Hession’s *A Matter of Misconduct!*, directed by Laura Attridge.**

**Opening on 14 May in Glasgow and touring to Edinburgh and Opera Holland Park in London, these shows feature a cast performing contrasting roles in both pieces.**

First performed in 1875, *Trial by Jury* is the first major hit from the partnership of WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. Set around a classic case of broken vows - the defendant having literally left the claimant at the altar - the trial bubbles over with emotion, humour, and downright chaos, leaving the jury divided. How will they decide between the charming yet swindling defendant and the utterly captivating claimant?

**Toby Hession** conducts a fabulous comic cast in this 150th anniversary production, that includes **Richard Suart** (*Gianni Schicchi* 2023), **Jamie MacDougall** (*Albert Herring* 2024) and Emerging Artists **Kira Kaplan** (*Opera Highlights* 2025), **Chloe Harris** (*Opera Highlights* 2025) and **Edward Jowle** (*The Makropulos Affair* 2025).

Following the crowd-pleasing political satire In Flagrante, which premiered on the 2023/24 Opera Highlights tour, is **Emma Jenkins** and **Toby Hession’s** *A Matter of Misconduct!,* **a** new co-commission and co-production by **Scottish Opera** and **D'Oyly Carte Opera.**

A 21st Century response to the themes of *Trial by Jury*, *A Matter of Misconduct!* tells the story of how when a scandal threatens to break about the front runner in a bloody leadership campaign, a lawyer is needed to prevent information from reaching the press. Sylvia Lawless from the firm Lawless, Lawless, Lawless and Crook must find the loopholes in this modern take on unsavoury behaviour.

**Toby Hession** once again conducts **Jamie MacDougall** and Emerging Artists **Ross Cumming** (*Opera Highlights* 2025), **Kira Kaplan**, **Chloe Harris** and **Edward Jowle** in this daring new operetta.

**Toby Hession said: ‘**I am extremely proud and excited to present *A Matter of Misconduct!* to the world – my first large-scale work for the stage. Emma Jenkins and I, in our third collaboration together for Scottish Opera, have had an enormous amount of fun creating this farcical story of political sleaze and scandal, and in particular exploring what ‘operetta’ might look like in the twenty-first century. I feel very strongly that we have created a piece that is unique in the current operatic landscape. Audiences can expect a laugh-a-minute evening, full of catchy, quirky tunes, and brilliant rhymes – but with a serious point at its core (as is the key to all good satire).

‘Working with Emma on this venture has been a total joy – and the piece reflects our (very silly!) shared sense of humour. For all the laughs along the way, her years of experience as both a librettist *and* a director have been invaluable to me as a young composer, and I feel enormously lucky to have benefitted from her guidance and wisdom as I’ve navigated my writing process. I would also like to express my gratitude to Scottish Opera and D’Oyly Carte Opera for the enormous trust they have collectively placed in me to create this. I can’t wait to share the result with our audiences in Scotland and London very soon!’

Librettist **Emma Jenkins** said: *'A Matter of Misconduct!* is a fast-paced satirical farce that straddles the worlds of politics and the judiciary. It marks the third opera that Toby and I have created together, giving us the chance to refine our signature style—one driven by a simple goal: to entertain. We want to take audiences on a rollercoaster ride of great music, playful text, and slapstick, and—if all goes to plan—make the audience laugh out loud.

Operetta has sometimes been dismissed as a lesser art form, but we embrace it wholeheartedly as a vibrant, dynamic genre with huge potential for modern audiences. Farce is rare in the operatic canon, yet opera—where heightened emotions, absurd situations, and split-second timing collide—is a perfect medium for it. Music enhances and underpins the clockwork mechanics of farce, allowing comedy to flow seamlessly from both score and script. With *A Matter of Misconduct!* we set out to push this genre to its limits, updating it for today’s stage and, we hope, delivering a riotous theatrical experience designed purely for the pleasure of its spectators.

‘Perhaps operetta, reimagined for a modern audience, is not just a way to entertain but also a way to bring fresh energy to opera itself—mining new stories and rediscovering the sheer joy of theatrical mayhem. We hope you enjoy watching *A Matter of Misconduct!* as much as we’ve enjoyed writing it.'

Those who wish to discover more about *The Merry Widow, Trial by Jury* and *A Matter of Misconduct!* can attendPre-show Talks, which delve into the detail of the opera. Tickets are free but should be booked in advance. 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. At these performances, there are also free Touch Tours of the set and a live audio introduction before the start of the performance.

Specially created Access performances of *The Merry Widow* run alongside the mainstage productions in Glasgow and Edinburgh. With Dementia Friendly values at their core, afternoon Access performances are for those who enjoy a more relaxed opera experience. With tickets at just £12.50, these performances are open to all, including those who may be living with dementia or Long COVID, more comfortable at a shorter show, struggling to get to evening performances, or would simply benefit from the more relaxed atmosphere.

*The Merry Widow* is proudly supported by **Dunard Fund** and **Scottish Opera’s 'Play a Supporting Role’ Appeal.**

***Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* are supported by Scottish Opera’s New Commissions Circle.**

Tickets are on sale now at [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/the-merry-widow/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/the-merry-widow/) and [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/trial-by-jury-a-matter-of-misconduct/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/trial-by-jury-a-matter-of-misconduct/)

*The Merry Widow* creative team

Conductor **Stuart Stratford**

Director **John Savournin**

Designer **takis**

Lighting Designer **Ben Pickersgill**

Choreographer **Kally Lloyd-Jones**

Associate Designer **Lise Bondu**

*The Merry Widow* cast

Hannah Glawari **Paula Sides**

Danilo Danilovitsch  **Alex Otterburn**

Don Zeta **Henry Waddington**

Valentina **Rhian Lois**

Camille de Rosillon **William Morgan**

Nicky Negus **Matthew Kellett**

 Mr Kromow **Matthew Siveter**

Mr Bogdanovitch **Jonathan Forbes Kennedy**

Silvia **Ellie Neate**

Sam Briochi **Connor James Smith**

Carmelo Cascada **Christopher Nairne**

Olga **Amy J Payne**

Mr Pritischitsche **Francis Church**

Paulina **Rosie Lavery**

*Trial by Jury* creative team and cast

Conductor **Toby Hession**

Director **John Savournin**

Choreographer **Kally Lloyd-Jones**

Designer **takis**

The Lighting designer **Ben Pickersgill**

Learned Judge **Richard Suart**

The Plaintiff **Kira Kaplan\***

The Defendant **Jamie MacDougall**

Counsel for The Plaintiff **Chloe Harris\***

Usher **Edward Jowle\***

*A Matter of Misconduct!* creative teamand cast

Conductor **Toby Hession**

Director **Laura Attridge**

Designer **takis**

Lighting designer **Ben Pickersgill**

Roger Penistone **Ross Cumming\***

Sandy Hogg **Jamie MacDougall**

Cherry Penistone **Chloe Harris\***

Sylvia Lawless **Kira Kaplan\***

Hugo Cheeseman **Edward Jowle\***

\*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2024/25

Performance Diary

***The Merry Widow* (Lehár)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

30 April 2025, 7.15pm

7 • 10 • 17 May, 7.15pm

4 May, 3pm (Audio-described performance with Touch Tour at 1.45pm)

Pre-show talk 10 May, 6pm

Relaxed Access performance 15 May, 3pm (Audio-described performance)

**Eden Court Inverness**

22 May, 7.15pm

24 May, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

29 May, 7.15pm

1 June, 3pm (Audio described performance with Touch Tour at 1.45pm)

5 • 7 June, 7.15pm

Relaxed Access performance 3 June, 3pm (Audio-described performance)

Pre-show talk 5 June, 6pm

**His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen**

12 June, 7.15pm

14 June, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

**Opera Holland Park, London**

19 • 21 • 25 • 27 • 28 June, 7.30pm

***Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* (Gilbert & Sullivan and Hession)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

14 May, 7.15pm

16 May 2025, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

30 May, 7.15pm

6 June, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

**Opera Holland Park, London**

24 & 26 June, 7.30pm

-ENDS-

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

You can follow Scottish Opera on Bluesky, Facebook, Instagram, You Tube and Tik-Tok **@ScottishOpera**

Notes to Editors

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. The Company was founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson with the goal ‘to lay the treasures of opera at the feet of the people of Scotland’, opening with performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The 2022/23 season marked its 60th Anniversary.

Scottish Opera’s performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly commissioned world premieres, balancing favourites with under-explored works. The Company collaborates with the world’s finest singers and creatives, together with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses for each opera. Recent accolades include an International Opera Award 2023 Nomination for *Il trittico*, a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards, a 2017 UK Theatre Award, and a 2020 RPS Award. The Company took operas to Brooklyn in 2017 and Adelaide in 2020, and the 2022/23 season saw productions first staged at Scottish Opera appearing in Santa Fe, Madrid, Toulouse, and Los Angeles. The 60th Anniversary Season included the UK fully staged premiere of Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* and the Company premiere of Puccini’s *Il trittico*.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland to ensure performances are within reach of as many of the country’s dispersed population as possible. This is one of the most extensive touring programmes of any European opera company and a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education & Outreach programme, the oldest in Europe, includes an annual in-person and digital Primary Schools Tour, bringing children the opportunity to perform their own specially commissioned piece alongside 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 committed to making opera for all, presenting opera at the highest possible standards in theatres across the country, outdoors on tour, and digital audiences around the world. The Company’s 2021 production of *The Gondoliers*, filmed live at Festival Theatre Edinburgh, is available on BBC iPlayer and OperaVision. Scottish Opera’s on Screen productions are available to watch at [www.scottishopera.org.uk/what-s-on/opera-on-screen](http://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*, Menotti’s *The Telephone*, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, *Mister MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep*, and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Renowned for their flexibility and craftsmanship, Scottish Opera productions are frequently presented by opera houses across the globe. Two of our 60th Anniversary productions have been presented by co-producer Welsh National Opera: Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* was in Cardiff, Llandudno, Bristol, Plymouth, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Southampton from September to November 2023. Puccini’s *Il trittico* was performed in Cardiff in October 2024.

Following on from a run at the Opera Comique in Paris, Detroit Opera performed our 2019 production of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves* in April 2024. It just performed *Ainadamar,* which was also presented by The Metropolitan Opera in New York last autumn. In spring 2025, *Breaking the Waves* opens at Houston Grand Opera in a co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Opera Ventures, Scottish Opera, Théâtre National de l’Opéra Comique, and Adelaide Festival that began life in Scotland.

In addition, our 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* was performed twice in Canada: at Vancouver Opera in February 2024, and at Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in April and May 2024.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.

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**For additional press details please contact the Scottish Opera press office:**

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