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##### Press Release

13 January 2025

**SCOTTISH OPERA CELEBRATES HEALING THROUGH MUSIC WITH *BREATH CYCLE* LIVE PERFORMANCES**

**Scottish Opera brings its pioneering health and arts initiative, *Breath Cycle*, to the stage with two special evenings of live performance at The Beacon, Greenock (31 January), and Glasgow’s Tron Theatre (1 February).**

These intimate performances showcase the transformative powers of daily practice in breath control and vocal training for individuals suffering from a range of lung conditions, as well as supporting them to share their lived experience of coping with often life limiting lung conditions, through a series of song writing workshops. The intention is to support people in their journey to reclaim their physical and mental resilience. Award-winning composer **Gareth Williams** and writer **Martin O'Connor** lead an exceptional ensemble featuring Admiral Fallow's **Louis Abbott**, operatic tenor **David Douglas**, and actor-songwriter **Frances Thorburn**, accompanied by violin, cello, and piano who will perform their renditions of a selection of the songs that have been created during the workshops over the past three years.

*Breath Cycle* was originally developedin 2013 by Scottish Opera and Glasgow’s Gartnavel General Hospital West of Scotland Adult Cystic Fibrosis Unit, to explore whether building lung capacity and developing breath control as part of a daily vocal routine could prove beneficial to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of patients.

Scottish Opera repurposed the project during lockdown to offer support to people struggling with the debilitating effects of Long COVID. Since Autumn 2021, nearly 500 people from Scotland and across the world have taken part in the *Breath Cycle* sessions mentored by Scottish Opera artists and over 3000 individuals have accessed the online resources freely available from the Company’s website to use at home at their own convenience.

Last year, Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland (CHSS) and Scottish Opera joined forces to develop online singing classes for people living with aphasia. These built on the *Breath Cycle* project, to unlock the therapeutic benefits of singing and song writing to people living with aphasia, which is caused by damage to the part of the brain that controls language, and in some cases leaves some unable to speak at all.

**Jane Davidson** MBE, Director of Outreach and Education at Scottish Opera said: ‘As we expand the Breath Cycle II programme in 2025, we're excited to bring these remarkable stories to the stage for the first time.

‘Our ensemble will bring to life the experiences of Breath Cycle participants through songs crafted by Gareth Williams and Martin O'Connor. These performances not only showcase personal journeys, but also raise awareness about respiratory health challenges facing many Scots. Audiences will even have the opportunity to experience some of our proven breathing exercises and vocal techniques firstthand.’

*Breath Cycle: A Story of Healing* is supported by **The Scottish Government, Cruach Trust, The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust** and **Scottish Opera's Education Angels**.

Tickets, priced £5 to £10 (pay what you can) are available now from [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/a-story-of-healing-breath-cycle-on-stage/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/a-story-of-healing-breath-cycle-on-stage/)

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

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

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**Performance diary**

**The Beacon, Greenock**

31 January 2025, 7.30pm

**Tron Theatre, Glasgow**

1 February 2025, 7.30pm

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 also won Outstanding achievement in Opera at the Critics’ Circle Awards 2023, for its production of Il trittico.

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 presented 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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