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##### Press Release

7 June 2024

**\*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL 10AM, 7 June 2024\*\***

**SCOTTISH OPERA ANNOUNCES 2024/25 SEASON FEATURING**

**13 OPERA OFFERINGS**

* **In its 62nd year, Scottish Opera presents eight emotionally powered operas; two composer collections; an animated opera; and a packed programme of touring, outreach, and education work**
* **World premieres of Karen MacIver’s *RED* by Scottish Opera Young Company, Toby Hession’s *A Matter of Misconduct!* and animated opera *Josefine* by Samuel Bordoli**
* **New productions of Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*, Janáček*’*s *The Makropulos Affair*, Gilbert & Sullivan’s *Trial by Jury* and Lehár*’s The Merry Widow***
* **Britten’s *Albert Herring* specially created forLammermuir Festival**
* **Revival of 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale***
* **Opera in Concert includes *The Puccini* and *Strauss Collections***

Scottish Opera has unveiled its 2024/25 Season, which features 13 opera offerings: *Oedipus Rex*, *Albert Herring*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Makropulos Affair, The Merry Widow, Trial by Jury, A Matter of Misconduct!, RED, Josefine, The Puccini* and *Strauss Collections, Opera Highlights* and *Pop-up Opera*.

This includes three world premieres, four new productions, two composer collections, a revival of a much-loved show, and a packed programme of concerts, touring, outreach, and education work.

This high-octane collection of operas, concerts and tours covers a wide range of composers, styles and stories, demonstrating the Company’s continuing commitment to keeping opera accessible, entertaining, and performed to the highest possible standards for audiences all across Scotland.

**Alex Reedijk**, Scottish Opera General Director, said: ‘Our commitment to presenting world-class opera across all of Scotland is once again evident in our 2024/25 Season, which we are delighted to announce today.

‘We have 13 exciting opera adventures ahead of us: *Oedipus Rex*, *Albert Herring*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Makropulos Affair, The Merry Widow, Trial by Jury, A Matter of Misconduct!, RED, Josefine, The Puccini* and *Strauss Collections, Opera Highlights* and *Pop-up Opera.* Audiences can experience the full spectrum of human responses and feelings that only opera can evoke, from belly laughs to tears, with this diverse collectionof works, themes and composers.

‘It is hugely heartening to see enthusiastic audience and critical response to our work; this loyal support makes our art possible. We are immensely grateful to everyone who buys a ticket or generously supports us, and we are as ever thankful to the Scottish Government for ongoing core funding. We invite everyone to be a part of Scottish Opera and look forward to welcoming audiences at an upcoming performance.’

**Stuart Stratford**, Scottish Opera Music Director, added: ‘This is Scottish Opera’s 62nd year, and in our 2024/25 Season we are presenting music from more than 11 composers in 56 venues the length and breadth of the country, showing our unabated dedication to bringing opera to everyone in Scotland. Featuring a wide variety of styles and genres, it truly exemplifies what the Company is all about.

‘There are some more familiar works alongside brand new music, including the relentless forward momentum of Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex*, the *bel canto* masterpiece of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale*, as well as world firsts from talented young composers like Toby Hession’s *A Matter of Misconduct!.* We are particularly delighted to launch *Josefine*, our very first opera told through animation, which follows on from our internationally acclaimed short film, *The Narcissistic Fish.*

‘Partnerships are a crucial part of making opera, and we are working with other internationally renowned opera companies to maximise resources and create fantastic shows. This Season sees co-productions with our friends at Welsh National Opera, Opera Holland Park, and D’Oyly Carte Opera.

‘We are also incredibly proud of the work we have just done in the 2023/24 Season, which included receiving an International Opera Award nomination for Puccini’s *Il trittico*. Our reach around the world is evident with a number of our productions being performed far and wide including *Ainadamar* this autumn at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and in spring 2025, Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves*, which also began life in Scotland, opens at Houston Grand Opera.’

A balance of international and home grown talent appears throughout the season.

Making their debuts with the Company are **Josef Jeongmeen Ahn, Stacey Alleaume, Seumas Begg, Chloe Harris, Edward Jowle, Kira Kaplan, Jonathan Forbes Kennedy, Michael Lafferty, Mykhailo Malafii, Filipe Manu** and **Callum Thorpe.**

There are welcome return visits from **Orla Boylan, Mark Le Brocq, Susan Bullock, Brad Cooper, Ross Cumming, Glen Cunningham, Helena Dix, Zoe Drummond, Alasdair Elliott, Catriona Hewitson, Hanna Hipp, Emyr Wyn Jones, Rhian Lois, Jamie MacDougall, Shengzhi Ren, David Stout, Richard Suart, Henry Waddington, Sinéad Campbell Wallace, Kitty Whately,** and **Roland Wood.**

**Season 2024/25 Productions**

This August 12, 18 and 19, at Edinburgh International Festival (EIF), Scottish Opera presents a promenade performance of Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* at the National Museum of Scotland.

Building on the Company’s well-honed model of 5-star community opera, the Museum’s awe-inspiring Grand Gallery is a spectacular setting for a night of classical drama, exceptional vocal performances and moving orchestral music.

In this co-presentation with EIF, Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts former Emerging Artist **Shengzhi Ren**(*Daphne* 2023)as Oedipus, **Kitty Whately** (*Don Giovanni* 2022) as Jocasta, **Roland Wood** (*Marx in London!* 2024) as Creon, **Callum Thorpe** as Tiresias, **Seumas Begg** as Shepherd and **Emyr Wyn Jones** (*Don Giovanni* 2022) as Messenger.

The director is **Roxana Haines** (*Hansel & Gretel* 2023)and designs are by **Anna Orton** (*The Tsar Has His Photograph Taken* 2021). An impressive community chorus from across the Central Belt of Scotland joins Scottish Opera for this unique performance of a timeless piece made anew for audiences.

In the ancient city of Thebes, Oedipus has been crowned king, but as the Oracle prophesises misfortune, it becomes ever more apparent that the new king cannot outrun his fate. A cathartic exploration of identity, free will, and the human condition, *Oedipus Rex* celebrates the bravery and resolve with which humans can face their destinies.

*Oedipus Rex* is supported by **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust**.

Award-winning **Daisy Evans** (*The Telephone* 2020) is directing a specially created production of Britten’s chamber opera, *Albert Herring*, for Lammermuir Festival. As well as at Haddington’s Corn Exchange in September, it will be performed at Theatre Royal Glasgow and Festival Theatre Edinburgh this October and November.

Britten’s loose adaptation of a Guy de Maupassant short story has become one of the 20th century’s most beloved operatic comedies, and in this production **William Cole** conducts a cast of top UK singers alongside up-and-coming talent. This includes former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Glen Cunningham** (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 2021) as Albert Herring, **Susan Bullock** (*Candide* 2022) as Lady Billows and **Jamie MacDougall** (*Marx in London*! 2024) as the Mayor, Mr. Upfold.

The market town of Loxford is just as busy with gossip as it is with trade. As Lady Billows organises the annual May Day festival, she is alarmed when her housekeeper Florence Pike informs her that not a single young lady is suitably virtuous to be crowned May Queen. The answer is to crown Albert Herring, a shy mother’s boy, as the May King. Albert has not done anything wrong – indeed, he has hardly done anything at all! Suddenly in the spotlight, Albert finds himself at the crossroads between the time-honoured traditions upheld by Loxford’s old guard and the freewheeling fun of his fellow youngsters, both of whom are quick to judge the odd one out.

Designer **Kat Heath** brings a colourful eye to this heart-warming coming-of-age story that celebrates finding one’s own path in life despite – or perhaps because of – the misadventures along the way.

*Albert Herring* is supported by **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust**.

Conducted by **Stuart Stratford**, a revival of the 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* opens at Theatre Royal Glasgow in October, and tours to Inverness, Edinburgh and Aberdeen.

Director and Choreographer **Renaud Doucet** and designer **André Barbe** (*La bohème* 2017) bring the quick-witted comedy to life with typically colourful and quirky style. Set in Rome at the cusp of the Swinging Sixties, the eccentric characters are given life in a world that is the perfect setting for a titanic clash of generations. This highly successful production of *Don Pasquale*, which began life at Scottish Opera, was recently seen in Miami, Genova, Vancouver, and Toronto.

**David Stout,** who delighted audiences in *The Barber of Seville* in autumn 2023, returns to Scottish Opera in the title role, with three up-and-coming singers making their Scottish Opera debuts in the main roles. **Stacey Alleaume** is Norina, **Filipe Manu** is Pasquale’s son Ernesto and **Josef Jeongmeen Ahn** is Doctor Malatesta.

*Don Pasquale* is supported by **The Scottish Opera Syndicate**.

In February, for the first time since 1993, Scottish Opera is presenting a full staging of *The Makropulos Affair* by Janáček, in a new co-production with Welsh National Opera.

*The Makropulos Affair* tells the story of Emilia Marty, Elina Makropulos, E.M.; the stylish, enigmatic diva who has lived many lives, and for over three centuries has been on a quest to become a great opera singer. Captivating minds and hearts along her journey through time and across Europe, her existence throws up questions of science and nature, reality and fantasy, and life and death. When the elixir she was given begins to lose its power, and when secrets of her lives and loves come to light, she can no longer outrun these essential human tensions.

**Martyn Brabbins** conducts The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, with **Orla Boylan** (*Marx in London!* 2024) leading the cast as Emilia Marty, **Brad Cooper** (*Daphne* 2023) as Albert Gregor, **Henry Waddington** (*Greek* 2018) as Doctor Kolenatý and **Mark Le Brocq** (*Nixon in China* 2020) as Vitek.

Opening at Theatre Royal Glasgow before touring to Festival Theatre Edinburgh, this production directed by **Olivia Fuchs** with multi-layered, poetic designs by **Nicola Turner**, was nominated for a Southbank Sky Arts Award when presented by Welsh National Opera in 2022. An English translation makes this psychologically astute story even more immediate.

*The Makropulos Affair* is supported by **The Alexander Gibson Circle.**

Opening in April in Glasgow before touring to Inverness, Edinburgh and Aberdeen is a new co-production with D’Oyly Carte Opera and Opera Holland Park of *The Merry Widow*.

Lehár’s charming operetta is directed by **John Savournin** (who last appeared with Scottish Opera in *Ainadamar* in2022), conducted by **Stuart Stratford**,with celebrated stage designer **takis** bringing his signature visual dynamism to the romance. A new English translation by **John Savournin** and **David Eaton** makes this operetta’s wit sparkle. Details of the cast will be announced later this year.

*The Merry Widow* is set at a lavish Parisian party, a grand occasion for dancing, drinking, and indiscreet love affairs. Baron Zeta – ambassador from the cash-strapped fictional Balkan state of Pontevedro – has a slightly more serious matter in mind. Among his party is Hanna Glawari, a sprightly Pontevedran widow who has arrived in town to enjoy life and her late husband’s immense fortune. Zeta cannot bear the thought of Pontevedro losing half its national wealth should Hanna marry a Parisian, so he sets his First Secretary Count Danilo to keep tabs on her heart. Little does he know that they have quite the history…

*The Merry Widow* is supported by Scottish Opera’s **‘Play A Supporting Role’** Appeal**.**

In May and June 2025, to celebrate 150 years of D’Oyly Carte Opera and Gilbert & Sullivan, a sprightly double bill of justice and its miscarriages comes to life alongside *The Merry Widow*: a new production of *Trial by Jury*, and the world premiere of *A Matter of Misconduct!,* a new operetta by **Toby Hession** with a libretto by **Emma Jenkins**.

*Trial by Jury* is directed by **John Savournin**, and **Laura Attridge** directs *A Matter of Misconduct!.* Conducting The Orchestra of Scottish Opera for both productions is **Toby Hession**, and designs are by **takis**.

With a comic cast including **Richard Suart** and **Jamie MacDougall** and Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artists **Ross Cumming**, **Kira Kaplan**, **Chloe Harris** and **Edward Jowle** performing contrasting roles in both pieces, it promises an unmissable night of classic G&S comedy and new writing – two pillars of Scottish Opera’s output. The first major hit from the partnership of WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan satirises the mechanisms of justice through a classic case of broken vows – the defendant having literally left the plaintiff at the altar. The jury’s sympathies are divided in a case that bubbles over with emotion, humour, and downright chaos: how will they decide between the charming, yet rakish, defendant and the utterly captivating plaintiff?

Accompanying it is *A Matter of Misconduct!,* set in the press room at Number 9 Downing Street. When a scandal threatens to break about the frontrunner in a bloody leadership campaign, a lawyer is needed to prevent information from reaching the press. Enter Sylvia Lawless from the firm Lawless, Lawless, Lawless and Crook who must find the loopholes. This modern take on scurrilous behaviour follows Jenkins and Hession’s crowd-pleasing political satire *In Flagrante*, premiered on the 2023/24 Opera Highlights tour.

This new double bill is a co-production with D’Oyly Carte Opera and Opera Holland Park. *A Matter of Misconduct!* is a new co-commission by Scottish Opera, D’Oyly Carte Opera, and Opera Holland Park.

Supported by **Scottish Opera’s New Commissions Circle**.

**Opera in Concert**

Music Director **Stuart Stratford** curates Scottish Opera’s annual concert programme, introducing audiences to rare and underexplored work. Scottish Opera continues a crowd-pleasing ‘collection’ series in 2024/25 with explorations of two beloved opera composers: Giacomo Puccini and Richard Strauss.

To mark the centenary of the composer’s death, *The Puccini Collection* takes placein November this year at Usher Hall, Edinburgh and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, featuring favourite arias, ensembles and orchestral interludes from Puccini’s timeless operas. Soloists **Sinéad Campbell Wallace**, (*The Puccini Collection* 2021), **Mykhailo Malafii**, and **Roland Wood** (*Marx in London!* 2024), are accompanied on stage by The Orchestra of Scottish Opera under the baton of **Stuart Stratford**.

Featuring excerpts from well-known and well-loved works including *Tosca, Manon Lescaut,* and *La bohème*, as well as rarer gems from *Le villi* and *Edgar*, there is plenty for newcomers and aficionados alike in *The Puccini Collection*.

In March 2025, *The Strauss Collection* comes to Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and Usher Hall, Edinburgh.

Following the success of *Daphne* in 2023, Scottish Opera is delighted to present a concert spanning some of the finest music Richard Strauss ever wrote. The German composer’s early 20th-century output shows the heights of his harmonic and dramatic daring, exemplified by the three operas in this concert – *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Arabella*, and *Der Rosenkavalier*.

**Stuart Stratford** leads The Orchestra of Scottish Opera through the German composer’s most lush and captivating scenes and arias, with a cast including sopranos **Helena Dix**, **Rhian Lois** (*La bohème* 2020), mezzo-soprano **Hanna Hipp** (*Kátya Kabanová* 2019) and baritone **Roland Wood** (*Marx in London!* 2024).

*The Puccini Collection* and *The Strauss Collection* are supported by **Friends of Scottish Opera** and **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust**.

**Digital productions**

After the success of 2020’s live-action opera short, *The Narcissistic Fish*, Scottish Opera is excited to present its first ever animated opera short *Josefine*, produced in partnership with Maestro Broadcasting.

This 14-minute film, inspired by Franz Kafka’s last short story ‘Josefine the Singer’, is directed by Scottish Opera’s resident filmmaker **Antonia Bain** and composed by former Emerging Artist Composer-in-Residence **Samuel Bordoli,** with a libretto co-authored by the pair. The Executive Producer is **Gemma Dixon**, and the Animation Director is **Sophie Bird**.

The recording features 2022/23 Emerging Artist **Zoe Drummond**, a chorus including **Osian Wyn Bowen**, **Phil Gault**, **Jane Monari**, **Frances Morrison-Allen**, **Colin Murray**, **Sarah Power**, **Christian Schneeberger**, **Sarah Shorter** and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera conducted by **Susannah Wapshott**, Scottish Opera’s Chorus Director.

By combining the mediums of opera and animation, *Josefine* promises a new and exciting way to experience and explore both art forms. Taking place in a desert world where a creature’s unearthly voice attracts sprites who are enthralled by it, the piece explores the complicated relationship between the singer and audience and the ever-more-relevant question of art’s place in times of crisis. With confirmed screenings at the Film Festival at Vienna’s Rathausplatz in summer 2024, as well as other dates to be announced, *Josefine* will soon be coming to a screen near you.

*Josefine* is supported by **Scottish Opera’s New Commissions Circle**.

***Opera Highlights***

Scottish Opera produces world-class work at every scale. The Company’s extensive touring programme is one of the largest of any European opera company, ensuring performances are within reach of as many of Scotland’s dispersed population as possible.

From 25 January to 22 March2025, *Opera Highlights* goes on the road again visiting 24 venues around Scotland, in a vibrant new production directed by **Rebecca Meltzer**.

A troupe of talented singers, including Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artists **Ross Cumming**, **Chloe Harris** and **Kira Kaplin**, perform in this one-of-a-kind show, programmed by **Fiona MacSherry**, Scottish Opera’s Head of Music. They are accompanied on the piano by Music Director **Joseph Beesley**.

They will travel to Cumbernauld, Kelso, Langholm, Clydebank, Tain, Fochabers, Midmar, Troon, Stranraer, Peebles, Mid Yell, Lerwick, Campbeltown, Craignish, Strontian, Dunoon, Castlebay, Tarbert, Ullapool, Durness, Thurso, Killin, Anstruther, and Dundee.

Scottish Opera is also running 11 schools workshops and four community sessions alongside *Opera Highlights,* in the following locations: Tain, Fochabers, Troon, Stranraer, Lerwick, Mid Yell, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Castlebay, Tarbert, Ullapool, Thurso, Anstruther, and Dundee.

*Opera Highlights* is supported by **Friends of Scottish Opera**.

**Scottish Opera Young Company**

From 18 to 21 July 2024, Scottish Opera Young Company is presenting the world premiere of *RED,* a darkly comedic piecedrawn from fairy tales by The Brothers Grimm, at the Company’s Production Studios in Glasgow.

An interwoven story of the four stages of women’s lives that often feature in folk tales, *RED* is by award-winning composer **Karen MacIver**, with a libretto by Scottish Opera’s Director of Outreach and Education, **Jane Davidson** MBE. The conductor is Young Company’s Artistic Director **Chris Gray**, with **Flora Emily Thomson** (*Maud* & *Down in the Valley* 2023 and *As The Seasons Turn* 2022) returning to direct the 14 young performers aged between 17 to 21. Set and costume designs are by **Finlay McLay**.

*RED* is inspired by Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Snow White and Hansel & Gretel, and features aspects of the ages of unnamed female figures — girl, maiden, mother, crone — that often appear in these famous stories. The 70-minute opera examinesthe circular, metamorphic nature of these tales as well as experiences shared by generations of women across time through magical realism.

Scottish Opera Young Company offers young singers a unique and practical introduction to the world of opera and the chance to develop their talent through a year-long programme, working with a range of opera professionals.

*RED is* supported by **The Rose Fund** and **Scottish Opera Education Angels**.

**Pop-up Opera**

The current *Pop-up Opera* tour is already underway and on the road until 6 July, with performances of *A Little Bit of The Merry Widow* and *A Little Bit of Don Giovanni* – one the ultimate rom-com, the other a moody story of one man’s fate – entertaining audiences from Dumfries to Orkney.

The 2024 *Pop-up* tour also includes the Scottish Opera new commission *Sophie & Bear*, a piece for Primary 1-4 that explores mental health awareness and self-care. The specially created piece is composed by **Graham McCusker**, and devised and written by Pop-up regulars **Andrew McTaggart** and **Jessica Leary**.

In these shows, audiences can experience opera on a miniature scale with performances brought to life by a storyteller, singers, instrumentalists and colourful illustrations.

Schoolchildren can also look forward to the tour popping up in primary schools for free performances.

Details of the 2024/25 *Pop-up Opera* tour will be announced early next year.

*Pop-up Opera* is supported by **Friends of Scottish Opera**.

**Emerging Artists**

The Scottish Opera Emerging Artistsprogramme offers young talent a period of full-time work with the Company to help launch their careers. This season they include soprano **Kira Kaplan,** mezzo-soprano **Chloe Harris**, baritone **Ross Cumming** (returning for a second Season), bass-baritone **Edward Jowle,** and repetiteur **José Javier Ucendo Malo** (also returning). The Elizabeth Salvesen Costume Trainee will be announced soon.

Emerging Artist singers perform in a number of this season’s productions and tours, and in recitals at the University of Glasgow and University of St Andrews this November.

They are supported by **Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artist Benefactors** and **Elizabeth Salvesen**.

**National Opera Studio**

As one of the National Opera Studio’s partners, Scottish Opera is delighted to host the 2024/25 NOS cohort – a group comprising some of the brightest rising star singers and repetiteurs from around the world – for a one-week residency of coaching with the Company's Music department and a guest director. The result is a brand-new showcase performance of operatic scenes and extracts on the set of *The Makropulos Affair* at Theatre Royal Glasgow on 21 February.

**The Orchestra of Scottish Opera**

The Orchestra of Scottish Opera regularly performs with other professional musical ensembles across the west of Scotland, supporting their work and the country’s wider ecology of live music and performing arts.

In the 2024/25 Season, The Orchestra performs with companies including Paisley Opera’s production of Gounod’s *Faust,*  Pops at the Phil – The Golden Age of Radio and Early Television, Dundee Choral Union, City of Glasgow Chorus – A Christmas Cracker and Ayr Arts Guild, with more engagements to be announced.

**Special Delivery**

From 30 November to 29 December at Cumbernauld Theatre at Lanternhouse, is *Special Delivery*, presented by Cumbernauld Theatre Company, Visible Fictions, and Scottish Opera.

An enchanting musical journey filled with wonder, created for little ones aged 3-7, this delightful show follows Santa on his busiest night of the year, Christmas Eve. Travelling around the world and squeezing down chimneys to deliver presents is a tough job, but this time it is made even more difficult when he is joined by a tiny mischievous hitchhiker who is looking for a way back home. Composed by **Karen MacIver** with words by **Clive King**, the director is **Dougie Irvine**.

**Opera in schools**

Scottish Opera’s children’s operas make learning fun and creative. Over the years, the Primary Schools Tour has inspired over 850,000 children across all 32 Local Authority areas.

This year’s show is *The Tale O’ Tam*, a beloved Scottish Opera original making its return with a new digital version. *The Tale O’ Tam,* composed by **Karen MacIver** with words by **Ross Stenhouse**,can be facilitated with an in-person workshop day led by Scottish Opera Teaching Artists with full rental of props and costumes, or entirely within the classroom by teachers themselves, all supported by materials provided by the Company.

Scottish Opera also offers teaching resources for Secondary School pupils. Having worked alongside Largs Academy to develop the materials suitable for young people, *The Elixir of Love:* Three Ways to Stage an Operais a free teaching resource for teachers. Pupils learn about music, drama, and art and design – incorporating elements of history, storytelling, and critical thinking – as they explore Donizetti’s comedy through three interpretations.

Taking place from 28 October to 22 November 2024, *The Giant’s Harp* is an interactive educational singing workshop and performance pairing for pupils in Primary 3-4, which has been created by mezzo-soprano **Lea Shaw** and harpist **Sharron Griffiths**,to introduce children to the beautiful music and versatility of the harp. Using the legend ofJack and the Beanstalk and its magical singing harp, youngsters learn about the long history of this instrument and the many continents and cultures where it can be found.

Disney Musicals in Schools collaborates with primary schools with no previous engagement with the arts and often facing a range of social and economic challenges. Teaching Artists guide pupils through rehearsals for special adaptations of Disney musicals and, crucially, provide training for teachers to build their pupils’ skills and confidence through the performance arts, creating a sustainable arts legacy for the future. Scottish Opera is Disney Musical in Schools’ first Scottish partner, and in this fourth successful year of the programme the Company engages with Additional Support Needs Schools for the first time.

New for 2024, Scottish Opera partners with St. Mary’s Edinburgh and Douglas Academy Glasgow to support, mentor, and increase the numbers of young singers who want to explore opera as a career. A notable focus for 2024/25 and future seasons, based on recently identified gaps in music education and career progression, is on those with Additional Support Needs and those already attending one of Scotland’s Specialist Music Schools.

The Opera in Schools programmes are supported by **Harbinson Charitable Trust, David & June Gordon Memorial Trust, Hayward Sanderson Trust, Scottish Opera’s Education Angels** and **JTH Charitable Trust**.

**Memory Spinners**

Scottish Opera continues to offer its Memory Spinners project for those living with dementia. The free project uses music, storytelling, movement, and visual arts to help Glasgow-based people living with dementia get creative, and form new support networks. Throughout each 8-week term, they share memories that are then incorporated into a relaxed performance for friends and family.

Supported by **The R S Macdonald Charitable Trust**, **Sylvia Aitken Charitable Trust**, **Bellahouston Bequest Fund**, **Trades House of Glasgow (Commonwealth Fund)**, and **Scottish Opera’s Education Angels.**

**Royal Conservatoire of Scotland collaboration**

Starting in 2025, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland introduces a one-year Artist Diploma in Opera in collaboration with Scottish Opera to offer a highly specialised combination of vocal, movement and acting training. This new partnership will nurture the next generation of international opera talent, and culminates in students taking leading roles in Glasgow and Edinburgh as part of Scottish Opera’s core season.

**Breath Cycle**

The ground-breaking online programme, *Breath Cycle*, was formed with the Respiratory and Cystic Fibrosis Medicine team at NHS Glasgow. Designed to benefit those living with conditions affecting lung health – particularly Long COVID – free resources introduce participants to vocal exercises and breathing techniques. The response is overwhelmingly positive, with participants citing improvement in breathing, energy levels and mood. More information is available on the Scottish Opera website, where a series of short tutorials and exercises can be accessed, or those interested can sign up for weekly online sessions and song writing workshops.

The Covid Composer’s Songbook, aselection of songs written by *Breath Cycle*participants, has been recorded for anyone to use and enjoy. Visit Scottish Opera’s website to download the full collection.

*Breath Cycle* has grown from its original work with cystic fibrosis patients to include those recovering from Long COVID, then developing further to offer broader wellbeing support. This year, Scottish Opera partners with leading experts at University of the West of Scotland and Chest Heart & Stroke Scotland to develop Breath Cycle alongside evolving understandings of lung health and its associated health concerns.

Supported by **The Scottish Government**, **Cruach Trust**, **The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust**, **W M Mann Foundation**, **Souter Charitable Trust** and **Scottish Opera’s Education Angels.**

**Community Choir**

Places are available in Scottish Opera’s Community Choir, open to adults of all ages and conducted by **Katy Lavinia Cooper**, which starts up again in September. Set up in 2012, the Choir gives members an opportunity to sing a wide variety of music – folk, world, classical, opera, popular, and more – in a supportive atmosphere, with sharings each term and opportunities to perform in full operas, including *Oedipus Rex* at the Edinburgh International Festival. They do not need to be able to read music or have previous experience. The Community Choir most recently performed *The Jolly Beggars* at Cottiers Theatre in Glasgow.

Supported by **Cruach Trust**, **The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust**, **W M Mann Foundation**, **Souter Charitable Trust**, and **Scottish Opera’s Education Angels.**

**Accessible Performances**

Scottish Opera is offering a range of accessible performances, to ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a live opera experience that is inclusive and welcoming. With Access Opera performances and audio-description available this year, the Company aims to make it as easy as possible to attend the opera.

Specially created Access performances of *Don Pasquale* and *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 a shorter running time (under two hours including an interval) and 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.

Those who are visually impaired can also take advantage of audio-described performances where a live commentary is provided by a specialist audio describer during the show, describing the action on stage without compromising the music. As part of the experience, a recorded introduction to the opera is available in advance, as well as a live audio introduction before the start of the performance.

At select performances, audiences can book on to a free Touch Tour to become more familiar with the set, scenery, props and costumes. Pre-show talks are also available. These half-hour sessions delve into the detail of each opera, enhancing the audience enjoyment and extending knowledge of the piece.

**Healing Arts Scotland**

The world’s first nationwide Healing Arts campaign unites organisations across culture, science, health, education, and government. A week of performances, exhibitions, and workshops begins at the Edinburgh International Festival on 19 August 2024. Scottish Opera performs at their event at Tramway, Glasgow on 21 August. Find out more at healingartsscotland.org

**Festival of Politics**

On 23 August 2024, the Scottish Parliament hosts its 20th Festival of Politics in partnership with Scotland’s Futures Forum and Healing Arts Scotland. Featuring sessions on political, social, and environmental issues, the festival offers people an opportunity to discuss current affairs. Scottish Opera is thrilled to present *In Flagrante* by **Toby Hession** and **Emma Jenkins** a short operatic political satire premiered on the 2023/24 *Opera Highlights* tour, in a performance at 3pm as part of the festival. Find out more at festivalofpolitics.scot

**The Small Magician**

*The Small Magician* is a trauma-aware, inclusive, accessible vocal education resource, which enables participants to healthily challenge and build their vocal technique and knowledge from the comfort of their own home or chosen space. Created by former Scottish Opera Emerging and Associate Artist **Lea Shaw**, the project aims to empower participants to embrace their voices and practice, as part of a wider sense of well-being and an awareness of mental/physical health. The guidance draws on classic pedagogy, scientific research, and Yoga and embodiment practices. Workbooks and resources covering breath-work, texture, diction, intonation, pattern, embodiment, and recovery can be accessed through

ko-fi.com/thesmallmagician

-ENDS-

Further information on the 2024/25 Season can be found at [**www.scottishopera.org.uk**](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/) from 10am on 7 June. Tickets go on sale for supporters on 13 June, and on public sale from 27 June.

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* is in Cardiff, Llandudno, Bristol, Plymouth, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Southampton from September to November 2023. Puccini’s *Il trittico* can be seen in Cardiff in June and 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 will have just performed *Ainadamar,* which is also being presented by The Metropolitan Opera in New York this 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.

**For additional press details please contact:**

Emily Henderson, Press Manager, 0141 242 0511,emily.henderson@scottishopera.org.uk

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



Performances

***Oedipus Rex* (Stravinsky)**

**National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh**

12 • 18 • 19 August 2024, 8pm

***Albert Herring*** **(Britten)**

**Lammermuir Festival, Corn Exchange, Haddington**

5 & 6 September 2024, 7.15pm

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

18 • 22 October, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance, with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

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

***Don Pasquale* (Donizetti)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

12 • 17 • 26 October 2024, 7.15pm

20 October, 3pm (Audio-described performance with Touch Tour at 1.45pm)

Pre-show talk 17 October, 6pm

Relaxed Access performance 25 October, 3pm (Audio-described performance)

**Eden Court Inverness**

31 October & 2 November, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

8 • 16 November, 7.15pm (Pre-show talk at 6pm)

10 November, 3pm (Audio-described performance with Touch Tour at 1.45pm)

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

**His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen**

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

***The Makropulos Affair* (Janáček)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

15 • 19 • 22 February 2025, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Touch Tour at 6pm)

Pre-show talk 19 February, 6pm

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

27 February & 1 March, 7.15pm (Audio-described performance with Pre-show talk and Touch Tour at 6pm)

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

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

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

14 & 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)

***The Puccini Collection***

**Usher Hall, Edinburgh**

22 November 2024, 7.30pm

**Glasgow Royal Concert Hall**

23 November 2024, 7.30pm

***The Strauss Collection***

**Glasgow Royal Concert Hall**

6 March 2025, 7.30pm

**Usher Hall, Edinburgh**

8 March 2025, 7.30pm

***Opera Highlights***

**2025 Tour**

25 January – 22 March

Touring to Cumbernauld, Kelso, Langholm, Clydebank, Tain, Fochabers, Midmar, Troon, Stranraer, Peebles, Mid Yell, Lerwick, Campbeltown, Craignish, Strontian, Dunoon, Castlebay, Tarbert, Ullapool, Durness, Thurso, Killin, Anstruther, and Dundee.

Workshops and four community sessions alongside *Opera Highlights,* will also take place in Tain, Fochabers, Troon, Stranraer, Lerwick, Mid Yell, Campbeltown, Lochgilphead, Castlebay, Tarbert, Ullapool, Thurso, Anstruther, and Dundee.

***RED* (MacIver)**

**Scottish Opera Production Studios**, **Glasgow**

18-20 July 2024, 7.15pm

21 July 2024, 3pm

**Pop-up Opera**

**Summer Tour** 8 June – 6 July 2024

Touring to West Kilbride, Whiting Bay (Isle of Arran), Coatbridge, Bishopbriggs, Shotts, Lochcarron, Balintore, Helmsdale, Stromness & Cromarty (Orkney) and Glasgow

**Emerging Artists Recitals**

**University of St Andrews**

6 November 2024, 1pm

**University of Glasgow**

7 November 2024, 1.10pm

**National Opera Studio**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

21 February 2025, 6pm

**The Orchestra of Scottish Opera**

**Paisley Methodist Central Hall**

6 & 9 October 2024, 7.15pm

Paisley Opera:Gounod’s *Faust*

**City Halls, Glasgow**

13 October 2024, 3pm

Pops at the Phil – The Golden Age of Radio and Early Television City Halls

**Caird Hall, Dundee**

15 December 2024, 7.30pm

Dundee Choral Union Concert

**Glasgow Royal Concert Hall**

22 December 2024, 3pm

City of Glasgow Chorus – A Christmas Cracker

**Ayr Town Hall**

14 February 2025, 7.30pm

Ayr Arts Guild Concert

***Special Delivery* (MacIver)**

30 November – 29 December 2024

Performances at 10am and 1pm

Visit lanternhousearts.org for full details

**Healing Arts Scotland**

**Tramway, Glasgow**

21 August 2024, 6.30pm

Visit healingartsscotland.org for full details