



PRESS RELEASE

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SCOTTISH OPERA WELCOMES SEVEN EMERGING ARTISTS FOR 2016/17 SEASON

Scottish Opera has welcomed a talented new group of Emerging Artists for the 2016/17 Season: **Beth Hicks, Emma Kerr, Jim Manganello, Hazel McBain, Lliam Paterson, Elgan Llyr Thomas** and **Maria Struckova**.

The Emerging Artists programme offers young artists the opportunity of a lifetime – a period of full-time work with the Company to help them launch their careers. Initially set up to nurture outstanding young singers, the programme now also includes positions for a director, repetiteur, costume trainee and a composer in residence.

The Elizabeth Salvesen Costume Trainee is **Beth Hicks**, who has a first class degree in Costume and Performance Design from Bournemouth Arts University. She has previously worked in the armoury department at the Royal Shakespeare Company and on television series, *The Crown*. Beth undertakes commissions for decorative embroidery, and specialises in goldwork embroidery.

Edinburgh-born mezzo soprano **Emma Kerr**, The Robertson Trust Scholarship Emerging Artist, trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, and was a Glyndebourne Festival Opera Jerwood Young Artist 2015. In Scottish Opera's 2015/16 Season, she performed the title role in *Ariodante* Unwrapped, and featured in *Così fan tutte*, *Rusalka* and *The Mikado*. This Season, Emma will play Cherubino in the dementia friendly performance of *The Marriage of Figaro*, and feature in *Opera Highlights* and Philip Glass's *The Trial*.

Director **Jim Manganello**, from Detroit, co-founded Fratellanza Theatre and is also a movement director and actor. He trained at École Lassaâd, Brussels, and discovered his love of opera while acting as a masked performer in a workshop for Dutch National Opera's *Lulu*. Jim has been the resident assistant director at the Citizens Theatre, worked on Scottish Opera's *Ariodante*, and performed with several theatres in America and Belgium. His directing credits include *War and Peace* (Viaduct, Chicago), *Richard II* and *Measure for Measure* (University of Michigan). This Season for Scottish Opera he was movement and assistant director on *The Elixir of Love*, and will direct *Opera Highlights*.

The John Mather Charitable Trust Emerging Artist is soprano **Hazel McBain**, from Glasgow, who sang the role of Giannetta in Scottish Opera's touring production of Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*. Hazel studied in London at the Royal College of Music, and continued her training at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow. She made her debut with Scottish Opera as Katchen in *Werther* in 2013, and appeared in The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert performance of *L'amico Fritz*. She will also feature in Philip Glass's *The Trial*.

Composer in Residence **Liam Paterson**, who is originally from Aberdeenshire, was a postgraduate student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as an accompanist and répétiteur. Earlier this year, Liam presented two new works inspired by Edwin Morgan, Glasgow's first Poet Laureate, at the Aye Write! book festival. The dramatic song cycle *Spirit of the Place* received its world premiere and a new piano work was also featured, inspired by Morgan's epic poem 'The New Divan'. This Season, the world premiere of Liam's new work for Scottish Opera, *The 8th Door*, will take place in March, a specially devised companion piece to *Bluebeard's Castle*, co-created and directed by Matthew Lenton of Vanishing Point theatre company. Liam is also composing a new piece for the *Opera Highlights* tour.

Tenor **Elgan Llyr Thomas** comes from North Wales and performed the role of Nemorino in Scottish Opera's *The Elixir of Love*. He studied at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. The 2015 winner of the prestigious Stuart Burrows International Voice Award, recent roles include Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* for Bury Court Opera, and Male Chorus in *The Rape of Lucretia* at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He will feature in Scottish Opera's production of *The Trial* in January, and *Opera Highlights*.

Repetiteur, **Maria Struckova**, is the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Emerging Artist. The Lithuanian pianist received her Master's degree in 2012, graduating from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre. As a soloist, she received an award for international excellence which was presented by the President of Lithuania. Awarded a full scholarship to study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, she has worked with the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, Vilnius City Opera, The Baltic Chamber Opera Theatre and British Youth Opera. Since joining the Emerging Artist scheme, Maria has worked on *The Marriage of Figaro* and will be involved in the musical preparation of *The Trial* and *The 8th Door*. In both productions she will play as part of The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

The Emerging Artists will perform at two recitals before the end of the year.

On Thursday 17 November, at 1.10pm, in the University of Glasgow Concert Hall, accompanied by **Maria Struckova**, **Emma Kerr**, **Hazel McBain** and **Elgan Llyr Thomas** will sing a programme of operatic highlights, including popular arias, duets, and some lesser-known works, with **Jim Manganello** directing.

On Friday 2 December, at 1pm, in Glasgow's Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the three singers will perform a programme of German Lieder and duets by Schumann, Mendelssohn and Richard Strauss, as well as songs by Ravel and Welsh composer Meirion Williams. Scottish Opera's Head of Music, **Derek Clark**, and **Timothy Dean**, Head of Opera at the RCS, will provide piano accompaniment.

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

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

PHOTO: The attached photo shows (left to right) Maria Struckova, Beth Hicks, Elgan Llyr Thomas, Hazel McBain, Emma Kerr, Lliam Paterson and Jim Manganello. Please credit Julie Howden.

Performance Diary

Thu 17 November 1.10pm

University of Glasgow Concert Hall (free entry)

Fri 2 December 1pm

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (Tickets available from www.rcs.ac.uk)

Notes to Editors

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. It was founded by Alexander Gibson in 1962 and was inaugurated with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the King's Theatre in Glasgow.

Notable achievements include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Inés de Castro* at the 1996 Edinburgh International Festival and complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production. Recent commissions include *Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland* (2008-10); *The Lady from the Sea*, *Clemency*, the double bill of *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* (winner of a South Bank Sky Arts Award) which premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival and 2016's *The Devil Inside* by Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh.

Scottish Opera is committed to bringing the widest possible range of opera, performed to the highest possible standards, to the maximum audience throughout Scotland and the UK. Each year it performs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness, as well as smaller theatres, village halls and community centres throughout the country.

Scottish Opera's Education and Outreach Department was the first of its kind of any opera company in Europe. It operates an extensive programme which involves over 8,000 primary school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and free *Unwrapped* taster sessions.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



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