



PRESS RELEASE

5 October 2017

SCOTTISH OPERA COLLABORATES WITH BE CHARLOTTE AND CARLA J. EASTON FROM TEENCANTEEN FOR #OPERAPASSION DAY

As part of BBC Arts Digital's #OperaPassion Day on Thursday 19 October, Scottish Opera is joining forces with **Be Charlotte**, fronted by Dundonian **Charlotte Brimner**, and **Carla J. Easton** from Glasgow-based band **TeenCanteen** for two exciting new collaborations.

Four Scottish Opera singers – **Hazel McBain**, **Andrew McTaggart**, **Alex Otterburn** and **Laura Zigmantaite** – will be recording with the musicians to give a unique spin to the songs 'One Drop' with Be Charlotte and 'Impossible Stuff' with Carla J. Easton. Performances of the final tracks and footage of the recording sessions will be shared online along with radio-ready audio recordings, contributing to an unprecedented day of live streaming and digital content giving never-before-seen access to the UK opera world. This is part of the BBC Opera Season featuring new films, documentaries, performances and special projects across BBC Two, BBC Four, Radio 3 and BBC Arts Digital.

Named Best Electronic Act at the Scottish Alternative Music Awards in 2016, **Be Charlotte**, who have been featured on Radio 1, evolved from the solo project of 20-year-old singer songwriter Charlotte Brimner, whose new EP 'Heart of Survival' is released this month. Charlotte will be joined by former Scottish Opera Emerging Artists, soprano **Hazel McBain** (*The Trial*, 2017) and baritone **Andrew McTaggart** (*The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, 2016) who will perform Be Charlotte's 'One Drop' in a rearrangement by Ciaran McEneny. Ciaran has

co-written songs with internationally acclaimed pop artists and is also in the band Pronto Mama.

Carla J. Easton from **TeenCanteen**, who released their debut album 'Say It All With A Kiss' in 2016, will be collaborating with Scottish Opera Emerging Artists **Alex Otterburn** (*Greek* 2017) and **Laura Zigmantaite** on 'Impossible Stuff', from her forthcoming solo album. The baritone and mezzo-soprano both star in Scottish Opera's upcoming production of *La traviata*. Lead singer and keyboard player for TeenCanteen, Carla has also achieved success with her solo psychedelic disco project, Ette, and has co-written Belle and Sebastian's forthcoming single 'Best Friends'.

Charlotte Brimner said: 'As a vocalist I have huge respect for the enormous talent within opera. I'm always keen to embrace new challenges so I'm excited to collaborate with Scottish Opera, and have one of my songs reimagined as a classical piece'.

Carla J. Easton said: 'I am so honoured to have been invited to collaborate with Scottish Opera on a track. My recent work has been a development into orchestration and a further exploration of the power of multiple human voices stacked in harmony to utilise and unite human bodies as an additional instrument in making music, so the opportunity to work with Scottish Opera to continue this exploration is really amazing.'

Scottish Opera, along with other major UK opera companies and the V&A Museum, will be collaborating with BBC Arts Digital on #OperaPassion Day on Thursday 19 October. The day aims to show the immense breadth of work that goes into every production and to engage new audiences and inspire the next generation of opera lovers.

As part of Scottish Opera's #OperaPassion live offering, the four singers and pianist on tour with Scottish Opera's popular *Opera Highlights* show will perform from Bowmore on Islay. They will be singing live and giving viewers an insight into life on the road.

Scottish Opera will also be sharing collaborations with a few unexpected partners including Steven Camley, The Herald's political cartoonist, who is creating four new cartoons based on popular opera plots. Three operatic poems, commissioned from celebrated Scottish authors Liz Lochhead, Alexander McCall Smith and Janice Galloway, will be read aloud by their authors. Throughout the day there will be opportunities to watch a 30 minute Pop-up Opera performance, explore the making of an opera for 6-18 month olds, and find out more

about how the artform can help those living with dementia through Scottish Opera's innovative Memory Spinners project.

As well as Scottish Opera, other companies working with BBC Arts Digital to present the day, which is supported by the British Council, are The Royal Opera House, English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne, Welsh National Opera, Northern Ireland Opera, the V&A, BBC Radio 3, Tomorrow's World and Manchester's Museum of Science and Industry.

The BBC Opera Season is part of a collaboration with the V&A Museum's blockbuster exhibition: Opera: Passion, Power and Politics which opened on 30 September.

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Charlotte Brimner biography:

Be Charlotte is the artistic project of songwriter Charlotte Brimner. The young Dundonian has been writing original music since the age of 13 and recently toured in South East Asia, Europe, US and UK. As a songwriter she has co-written music with artists from Sweden, Norway, Germany and Japan. To date she has released two singles and has a debut EP being released in October 2017.

Carla J. Easton biography:

Carla J. Easton burst onto the Scottish Music Scene with the eagerly awaited release of debut single 'Attack of the Glam Soul Cheerleaders (Parts 1 & 2)' in the summer of 2016. Quickly followed by the critically acclaimed full length studio album 'Homemade Lemonade' (under the alias Ette), 2016 also saw the release of 'Say It All With a Kiss' by TeenCanteen (all girl-band founded by Easton), Longlisted for Scottish Album of The Year 2017. Both of these records exemplify Easton's passion for polyphonic melodies, stacked harmonies and studio experimentation. With pure polished pop at their core, Easton's songs are melancholic epics packed into 3 minute synth driven mini dramas.

In September 2017 Easton recorded her sophomore solo album with Howard Bilerman (Arcade Fire, Leonard Cohen, British Sea Power) at Hotle2Tango, Montreal, Canada. This follows her participation in Banff Centre for Art and Creativity inaugural Singer Songwriter Residency in March 2017. In September 2017, Scotland's Belle and Sebastian released 'Best Friend' co-written by and featuring lead vocals from Easton.

Hazel McBain biography:

Hazel graduated with distinction from the opera course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. On graduating, she received the Ian Smith of Stornoway Award. She previously graduated with a first class honours from the Royal College of Music. Hazel was a Scottish Opera Emerging Artist for 2016-2017 where she performed the roles of Gianetta *L'elisir d'amore*, Caterina *L'amico Fritz* and Fräulein Bürstner/Leni in Philip Glass's *The Trial*. Other recent engagements include Susanna (cover) *Le Nozze di Figaro*, (Garsington Opera), Musetta *La Bohème* (Edinburgh Grand Opera/ Opera Bohemia), Kätchen *Werther* (Scottish Opera), Vixen *The Cunning Little Vixen* (British Youth Opera), Susanna *Le nozze di Figaro*, Papagena *Die Zauberflöte*, Minerva *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*, Servilia *La clemenza di Tito*, Lisette *La rondine*, and Anne Page *Sir John in Love* (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland).

Andrew McTaggart biography:

Andrew graduated from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow in 2012, where he attended the Alexander Gibson Opera School and studied with George Gordon and Kathleen McKellar Ferguson. Awards at the RCS included the *David Knox Memorial Prize*, the *Governor's Recital Prize for Singing*, and the *Florence Veitch Ibler Prize for Oratorio Singing*.

Notable concert engagements have included *Belshazzar's Feast* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, *Messiah* at Usher Hall, Edinburgh, Howard Goodall's *Eternal Light* with the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast and Christus in James Macmillan's *St John Passion* at the Association of British Choral Directors conference. Andrew has also been heard on BBC Radio 3 performing Finzi's *Let Us Garlands Bring* as part of the *Crear Scholarship* with Malcolm Martineau, Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs* and *Eternal Light* with the National Youth Choir of Scotland.

Andrew is a former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, where his roles have included Marchese d'Obigny *La traviata*, Bottom *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Samuel *The Pirates of Penzance* and Morales *Carmen*. Further engagements include Garibaldo *Rodelinda*, Notary *Don Pasquale* and Yamadori in the new David McVicar production of *Madama Butterfly*, all for

Scottish Opera, as well as concert engagements throughout the UK including Handel *Judas Maccabeus*, Vaughan Williams *Dona Nobis Pacem*. Faure *Requiem*, Mahler *Kindertotenlieder* and Vaughan Williams *Five Mystical Songs*.

Recent engagements include Handel *Messiah*, Brahms *Requiem*, Mendelssohn *Elijah*, title role *Noye's Flude* at the Lammermuir Festival, Baron Douphol *La Traviata* with Opera Bohemia, *Le Nozze di Figaro* with Scottish Opera and his debut as Lakai *Ariadne auf Naxos* for Opéra National de Lorraine, Nancy.

In the 2017/2018 season engagements include Gaspar *Rita* for West Green Opera and Andrew will continue to work on community outreach programmes with Scottish Opera. Concert engagements include *Messiah* (Royal Festival Hall) and Brahms *Requiem*.

Alex Otterburn biography

Having just completed his final year at the Royal Academy of Music, baritone Alex Otterburn recently performed the role of Eddy in Mark Anthony Turnage's *Greek*, a co-production between Scottish Opera and Opera Ventures which opened at Edinburgh International Festival. Alex gained a first class degree in Economics from the University of Manchester before embarking on his studies at the DIT Conservatory in Dublin. A 2014 winner of the International Opera Awards bursary, the following year he made his European concert debut as Curio (*Giulio Cesare*) at the Concertgebouw with the Symphonie Atlantique and as Schaunard in *La bohème* with the Lyric Opera in Ireland. This Season, Alex will perform in Scottish Opera's productions of *La traviata* and *Ariadne auf Naxos* as well as reprising his role in *Greek* at Theatre Royal Glasgow next year.

Laura Zigmantaite biography:

Lithuanian mezzo-soprano Laura Zigmantaite studied at the Academy of Music and Theater of Lithuania with professors R. Maciute and S. Stonyte, at the RAM with Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Iain Ledingham and Jonathan Papp and latterly at the National Opera Studio, London, where her time was generously supported by the Eileen Goddard Memorial Bursary from the Amar-Franses & Foster-Jenkins Trust. Still at the outset of her stage career, Laura has already performed the roles of Valetto *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, The Third Lady *The Magic Flute*, Rosweisse *Die Walkure*, Ida *Die Fledermaus*, The Lady in Red, The Second Siren and The Second Lady (O. Narbutaite's Lithuanian contemporary opera *Kornetas*), Cherubino *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zerlina *Don Giovanni*, Zita and Suora Zelatrice *Gianni Schicchi/Suor Angelica*, Mercedes *Carmen*, Nerone *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Hansel

Hansel and Gretel and *Mother Goose The Rake's Progress* (RAO Scenes), Ms. Bentson *Lakmé*, the eponymous role in *Carmen*, *Hanna May Night* and *Judith Duke Bluebeard's Castle*. Singing prizes include first prize at the Giovanni Musicisti competition in Italy, the Isabel Jay Prize and the Mozart Singing Competition. Laura recently sang the role of Nerone in Opera de Lyon's 2017 production of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*.

BBC Opera Season:

This Autumn, in collaboration with the V&A and Royal Opera House, the BBC will embark upon a season of opera programming featuring new films, documentaries, performances and special projects across BBC Two, BBC Four, Radio 3 and BBC Arts Digital. These major cultural institutions have come together with the shared vision to engage a wider audience with opera and to enthuse a new generation of opera lovers.

The season has been in development for the past three years and will take audiences behind the scenes to explore the social, political and historical context of major works. It will place world class performances centre stage on screens and radio airways, give new insights into the form through the world's greatest living opera stars, explore the emotive power of the art form and see opera companies from across the UK coming together for the first time with BBC Arts for an online celebration of British, European and global performance.

Scottish Opera biography:

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 *Unwrapped* taster sessions.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



For additional press details please contact:

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

Daisy Bartlett, Press Officer, 0141 242 0552, daisy.bartlett@scottishopera.org.uk