



PRESS RELEASE

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***OPERA HIGHLIGHTS* TOURS TO 14 VENUES ACROSS SCOTLAND THIS SPRING**

Scottish Opera's hugely popular *Opera Highlights* tour kicks off once again in February, travelling to 14 smaller, more remote venues the length and breadth of Scotland, from Lerwick in the north to Castle Douglas in the south.

Having already journeyed to 17 venues across the country in the Autumn, the Spring tour begins on 6 February in Livingston before heading to Hawick, Callander, Midmar, Halkirk, Kirkwall, Tain, Braemar, Montrose, Lerwick, Castle Douglas, Ballachulish, Pitlochry and Rutherglen.

Scottish Opera's Head of Music **Derek Clark** has curated an extremely varied programme including favourites from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, as well as lesser known gems rarely performed on the Scottish stage.

Opera Highlights, which tells the story of Henrietta and Leon, two stage managers who have to cope with the demands of opera stars Sophia and Petrarch every night on tour, also features a new work, entitled 'Wings', created especially for the tour by Scottish Opera's Emerging Artist Composer in Residence **Samuel Bordoli**. With something for everyone, from opera first timers to seasoned fans, *Opera Highlights* promises an intimate performance of great music.

The cast of the Spring tour is full of fresh new talent including mezzo-soprano **Catherine Backhouse** (*La traviata* 2017), The Robertson Trust Scholarship Emerging Artist at Scottish Opera; soprano **Máire Flavin**; baritone **Benjamin Lewis** and National Opera Studio graduate, tenor **William Morgan**. Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation Emerging Artist **Patrick Milne**, Scottish Opera's Emerging Artist Repetiteur, accompanies the four talented young singers on piano and **Jack Furness** (*Opera Highlights* 2016) makes a welcome return to the Company to direct.

Director **Jack Furness** said: 'Autumn's Opera Highlights was a really beautiful show to make, and re-exploring that with a new cast is going to be a fun adventure – I'm looking forward to it hugely.'

'William Morgan and I had a great creative partnership going in the Autumn, and it will be great to see how we can push his character further. It's great to be working with Máire Flavin again. We did a show together in Aberdeenshire, and she was really sensational in the role of Violetta. I'm excited to see what she brings to this role. I've also been wanting to work with Benjamin Lewis for a long time. He's one of the most exciting young baritones in the UK and this should be a real treat for audiences. And of course, Emerging Artist Catherine Backhouse who has been so brilliant in Scottish Opera's *La traviata*. Working with Patrick Milne at the piano, I'm hoping we can push the show's blend of off-beat comedy and theatrical depth into ever more interesting places.'

Scottish Opera's General Director, **Alex Reedijk**, said: 'Touring Scotland is at the heart of what we do and *Opera Highlights* is the perfect show to take to smaller and more remote communities around the country as it truly has something for everyone. After a successful 17-date Autumn tour, which saw the *Opera Highlights* team travel around Scotland from Stornoway to Stranraer, we're thrilled to be able to take the show on the road again this Spring. The

Autumn *Opera Highlights* tour was a hit with audiences, and director Jack Furness' imaginative approach will no doubt bring out the best in this Spring's fabulous young cast.'

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

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Cast and Creative Team

Soprano	Máire Flavin
Mezzo-soprano	Catherine Backhouse*
Tenor	William Morgan
Baritone	Benjamin Lewis
Music Director/Pianist	Patrick Milne*
Director	Jack Furness
Composer in Residence	Samuel Bordoli*
Programme curator	Derek Clark

*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist

Performance Diary

Howden Park Centre, Livingston

Tues 6 Feb, 7.30pm

Tower Mill, Hawick

Thu 8 Feb, 7.30pm

McLaren High School, Callander

Sat 10 Feb, 7.30pm

Village Hall, Midmar

Tues 13 Feb, 7.30pm

Ross Institute, Halkirk

Thu 15 Feb, 7.30pm

Orkney Theatre, Kirkwall

Sat 17 Feb, 7.30pm

Duthac Centre, Tain

Tues 20 Feb, 7.30pm

Village Hall, Braemar

Thu 22 Feb, 7.30pm

Town Hall, Montrose

Sat 24 Feb, 7.30pm

Garrison Theatre, Lerwick

Wed 28 Feb, 7.30pm

The Fullarton, Castle Douglas

Sat 3 Mar, 7.30pm

Village Hall, Ballachulish

Tue 6 Mar, 7.30pm

Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Thu 8 Mar, 7.30pm

Rutherglen Town Hall

Sat 10 Mar, 7.30pm

Notes to Editors

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.



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