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##### Press Release

7 April 2021

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**SCOTTISH OPERA REVEALS A PROGRAMME OF FILMED AND OUTDOOR PERFORMANCES FOR SPRING/SUMMER 2021**

* **Sir David McVicar returns to Scottish Opera to design and direct a new outdoor production of Verdi’s *Falstaff***
* **Pop-up Opera takes two specially-adapted trailers on the road with over 200 performances of five Gilbert & Sullivan shows: *The* *Pirates of Penzance*, *The* *Gondoliers*, *The* *Mikado*, *HMS Pinafore* and *Iolanthe***
* **Roxana Haines directs the latest Scottish Opera: *On Screen, Donizetti’s L'elisir d'amore***
* ***Live in South Lanarkshire*, an operatic film from Rutherglen Town Hall, reminding communities that local venues are ready to open their doors as soon as restrictions are eased**

Scottish Opera announces two films, along with plans to bring live opera back to audiences with outdoor performances in the summer, in alignment with the Scottish Government timeline for easing restrictions.

World renowned Scottish director **Sir David McVicar**, who last worked with Scottish Opera on his UK Theatre Award-winning production of *Pelléas and Mélisande,* returns to design and direct an outdoor production of Verdi’s *Falstaff*. Following a five-star run of outdoor performances of *La bohème* in the Company’s Edington Street Carpark in Glasgow last September, Scottish Opera presents *Falstaff* at the same location, and anticipates announcing further dates in Edinburgh in coming weeks. In this co-production with Santa Fe Opera, who also perform outdoors, **Sir David McVicar** ambitiously transforms the outdoor space to provide a stunning production of Verdi’s comic opera, sung in English, in a translation by Amanda Holden. Featuring an outstanding cast, including **Roland Wood** *(La bohème* 2020*)*, **Elizabeth Llewellyn** (*La bohème* 2020), **Phillip Rhodes** (*Hansel and Gretel* 2021), **Elgan Llŷr Thomas** (*Breaking the Waves* 2019), **Gemma Summerfield** (*The Magic Flute* 2018), **Louise Winter** (*In the Locked Room* 2012), **Sioned Gwen Davies** (*The Diary of One Who Disappeared* 2020), **Jamie MacDougall** (*Ariadne auf Naxos* 2018), **Aled Hall** (*Tosca* 2019) and **Alastair Miles** (*Pelléas and Mélisande* 2017).

In summer, Scottish Opera is back on the road bringing opera to local communities with its hugely popular Pop-up Opera tour, with five brilliant bite-size Gilbert & Sullivan shows. Condensing the fun-filled classics and all their frivolity into 25 minute performances of *A Little Bit of… The Gondoliers, The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance, HMS Pinafore and Iolanthe,* two specially-adapted trailers take to the road at the same time, attracting expected audiences of over 12,000, assuming seating in bubbles, with plans to be on the road by 8 June subject to Scottish Government guidelines. Popping up at a variety of iconic and surprising venues across Scotland and featuring some of Gilbert & Sullivan’s wittiest lyrics and best- known tunes, it’s an ideal opportunity for anyone new to opera to try a taster. The final leg of the tour, running throughout September, will offer a double bill of shows including the *Pirates of Penzance* and a revival of *A Little Bit of Bubble McBea*. Aimed at children in Primary 1 to 3, *Bubble McBea* deals with environmental issues in the coasts around Scotland, raising awareness of sea pollution in the run up to the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

Following the success of *Così fan tutte* in December, **Roxana Haines** turns to her next filmed performance of Donizetti’s *L'elisir d'amore* as part of the Scottish Opera: On Screen programme. Filmed at Glasgow’s Theatre Royal on 22 May 2021, it will be available to watch on the Scottish Opera website from 18 June. Before then, BBC Radio Scotland features audio excerpts from the performance as part of a special *Classics Unwrapped*, presented by **Jamie MacDougall**, on Sunday 13 June. Director, **Roxana Haines** explains how she has chosen to embrace the Austen era, ‘when social distancing was a natural part of daily etiquette’, for a charming production packed full of comedy and touching romance. Featuring Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artists\* **Catriona Hewitson**, **Shengzhi Ren** and **Arthur Bruce** alongside guest principals **Roland Wood** (*La bohème 2020),* **Elena Garrido Madrona** (in collaboration with Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Alexander Gibson Opera School) and an impressive 18 strong chorus.

On Friday 23 April, Scottish Opera releases *Live in South Lanarkshire*, a film of operatic favourites. The Company’s 2020 Opera Highlights performance at Rutherglen Town Hall was the last indoor performance for a live audience in the theatre, before the pandemic forced venues to close their doors over a year ago. However, this special one-off film gives Scottish Opera the key to Rutherglen Town Hall, to take advantage of the stunning surroundings in a celebration of local venues, encouraging communities to return as soon as guidelines allow. Filmed on 24 March, Scottish Opera’s Head of Music **Derek Clark** is joined by Emerging Artists **Margo Arsane** and **Catriona Hewitson** for a playlist including Bizet’s *Carmen*, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel* and more from the likes of Puccini, Mozart and Delibes, with an introduction from Rutherglen Town Hall’s Venue Manager, **Colin McWilliams**. In association with South Lanarkshire Council, *Live in South Lanarkshire* will be available to watch on Scottish Opera’s website.

Scottish Opera’s General Director*,* ***Alex Reedijk****,* said: ‘I am delighted that we are preparing to bring live music back to audiences following almost a year without live opera. *Falstaff* will be a love letter to our glorious art form, with over 120 people working together on the production. Sir David McVicar offers an amazing vision for our carpark as he directs and designs an ingenious show with exquisite 17th century period costumes, promising an evening of comedy, pathos and pure entertainment. Adding to what is sure to be a summer like no other, Pop-up Opera will tour to communities across Scotland for over 200 performances in two specially adapted trailers, offering double the fun for double the audiences.

Before then, and as we continue to make our way out of the pandemic, we are very happy to add to our collection of filmed performances, with *L’elisir d’amore* and *Live in South Lanarkshire*. We plan to be back in theatres presenting live opera as soon as restrictions allow, but in the meantime we are thrilled to be able to offer outdoor, live performances again.’

Scottish Opera’s Music Director,**Stuart Stratford**, said: ‘I am so excited that we are able offer outdoor, live opera to audiences across Scotland once again with *Falstaff* and Pop-up opera. Even more so that we have the opportunity to work with Sir David McVicar on *Falstaff* for what is sure to be a visual and musical feast. Sir David’s creativity and passion is immersed in every aspect of the production and his spectacular vision for our carpark location will make the audience experience even more visceral and immediate, especially in this outdoor setting. As Verdi’s last great work the piece contains all the fabulous searing melodies, raw emotion and comedy which brings together our incredible world-class cast and orchestra.

‘I am delighted that until then we can continue to provide performance through our Scottish Opera: On Screen programme, with *L'elisir d'amore* and *Live in South Lanarkshire*. As one of Donizetti’s most loved operas, *L'elisir d'amore’s* enchanting melodies embody this delightful romantic comedy for a truly fun and uplifting opera.’

*Ends*

Notes to Editors

All performances and films are being produced in line with Scottish Government guidelines. Live outdoor events are subject to social distancing measures and guidelines at the time of performance.

**Key Dates**

Live in South Lanarkshire\*\* 23 April

Pop-up Opera\*\*\* Beginning 8 June (subject to restrictions)

L’elisir d’amore 18 June

Falstaff\*\*\*\* More information coming soon

\* Emerging Artists are sponsored by The Robertson Trust, Elizabeth Salvesen and Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artists Benefactors.

\*\* Commissioned by South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture.

\*\*\*Pop-up Opera is supported by Garfield Weston Foundation (Weston Culture Fund), Backstage Trust, D'Oyly Carte Opera Trust, The Cross Trust and Scottish Opera’s Education Angels.

\*\*\*\**Falstaff* is supported by the Alexander Gibson Circle.

The Company’s Opera 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 Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, *Opera Highlights*, Janáček’s *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, Menotti’s *The Telephone* and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland.

The Company's performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly-commissioned world premieres, working in collaboration with the world's finest singers and creatives, alongside The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards and a Herald Angel, as well as a 2020 RPS Award nomination.

Scottish Opera's work caters for audiences of all ages – ranging from babies to people living with dementia – and our Young Company and Emerging Artist programme support the talent of the future.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland, from the largest-scale theatres to rural venues with a capacity as low as 22, to ensure we are within reach of as many of our country's very dispersed population as possible. A miniature mobile opera house – literally, opera performed inside a converted 40-foot-long trailer on the back of a lorry – brings ‘Pop-up Opera’ performances to thousands of people each year in a range of inspiring and unexpected community locations. This represents the most extensive touring programme of any opera company in Europe and is a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education and Outreach programme, which celebrates 50 years in 2021, includes an annual Primary Schools Tour, bringing upper primary-aged children the opportunity to perform their own specially-commissioned piece, alongside three 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 access performances including audio description, and performances which cater to those living with Dementia.

In the year to 31 March 2020, 116,960 people experienced Scottish Opera as audience members or as participants, across all of Scotland’s 32 Local Authority areas:

• 56 mainstage opera performances in Scotland plus tours to Belfast, London and Australia

• 8% of ticket buyers for mainstage opera performances in Scotland aged under 26

• 2,422 people watched specially-created opera productions for babies or toddlers

• 40,177 people participated in school’s workshops and performances

• 1,123 people living with Dementia participated in projects.

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