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##### **Press Release**

25 MAY 2021

**SCOTTISH OPERA RETURNS TO LIVE PERFORMANCE WITH OVER 200 POP-UP OPERA SHOWS THIS SUMMER**

Scottish Opera returns to live outdoor performance for the first time in nine months, with its popular Pop-up Opera Roadshow, starting Thursday 10 June 2021*.* Attracting expected socially-distanced audiences of over 12,000, two specially-adapted trailers will take to the road at the same time, condensing five fun-filled Gilbert & Sullivan classics and all their frivolity into 30 minute performances of *A Little Bit of… The Gondoliers, The Mikado, The Pirates of Penzance, HMS Pinafore* and *Iolanthe*.

Featuring some of Gilbert & Sullivan’s wittiest lyrics and best- known tunes, the shows are an ideal opportunity for anyone new to opera to try a taster. Cleverly re-scored by Scottish Opera’s Head of Music, **Derek Clark,** with story text by **Allan Dunn,** the shows will be popping up at a variety of iconic and surprising locations across Scotland starting in Inverness, before extending across Aberdeenshire, the Isle of Lewis and down to Dumfries and the Scottish Borders via Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. While past productions of Pop-up Operas have accommodated both the audience and performers inside the mobile Theatre Royal trailer, this year performances are al fresco with a covered stage and audiences out front in the open air, seated in household bubbles in line with the current Scottish Government guidelines.

The shows are brought to life by storyteller **Allan Dunn**, along with singers **Stephanie Stanway, Charlotte Hoather**, **Andrew McTaggart, Mark Nathan,** **Jessica Leary,** instrumentalists **Andrew Drummond Huggan, Laura Sergeant, Sasha Savaloni and Ian Watt,** with a series of colourful illustrations helping guide the audiences through the somewhat convoluted, but always comical, adventurous tales of Gilbert & Sullivan.

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 COP26 in Glasgow.

Scottish Opera’s General Director, **Alex Reedijk,** said: ‘The return to live performance is something we have long awaited and after 9 months we are delighted to kick off what is sure to be a summer like no other, with Pop-up Opera. The roadshow is at the heart of what we do as a company, travelling the highways and byways of Scotland to local communities and making opera accessible to all. So, we are thrilled to have the opportunity to return to this in a safe manner at locations across Scotland. Using two trailers allows us to offer over 200 performances with double the fun for double the audiences. We look forward to seeing everyone at our outdoor performances very soon and hopefully inside theatres in the near future.’

Scottish Opera’sDirector of Education, **Jane Davidson**, said: ‘We are delighted to have our Pop-up Opera back on the road with a collection of fantastically fun shows for the whole family to enjoy. With colourful illustrations and an incredible cast the pop-up shows will transport you in to the wonderfully weird world of WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, complete with glorious music, wit and heartfelt sentiment. Later in the summer, and with COP26 an important date in the 2021 global calendar, we hope that younger audiences will enjoy visiting the undersea world of Bubble McBea –  an original story which combines the idyllic setting of life on a remote Scottish island with issues around sea pollution. The show engages children in the climate change discussion and encourages them through the medium of music and storytelling, to consider the impact continued change will have on their own communities and the world as a whole.’

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

Tickets will be on sale at Scottish Opera’s website <https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/> from **Wednesday 2 June**. Dates and locations can be found below, with more still to be announced.

Notes to Editors

All performances 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.

**Show Descriptions:**

**A Little Bit of The Gondoliers**

Two gorgeous gondoliers, dozens of adoring girls and the lost heir to the kingdom of Barataria: it can mean just one thing – trouble. Float away with us to Venice for one of Gilbert & Sullivan’s wittiest satires... It’s all about love, actually!

**A Little Bit of HMS Pinafore**
Aboard the ship HMS Pinafore, Josephine, the captain’s daughter, is in love with one of the crew. Her father definitely doesn’t approve. Overturning social order and parental wishes alike, the couple plan to elope. But a surprise confession soon leaves everything in doubt…

**A Little Bit of Iolanthe**
Iolanthe is banished by the Fairy Queen for marrying a mortal. Now, 25 years later, two worlds again collide when her son announces he’s in love. Unfortunately, his beloved is a popular girl and he has some serious competition… Light-hearted G&S satire at its best, Iolanthe is full of fun.

**A Little Bit of The Mikado**
The Mikado has decreed that flirting should be punishable by death. But when his son Nanki-Poo falls for the beautiful Yum-Yum, it looks like someone might be heading for the executioner’s block!

**A Little Bit of The Pirates of Penzance**
A young man bound by an overactive sense of duty, a soft-hearted pirate king with a hopeless band of rogues at his side, a beautiful young girl, a very modern major-general and an ineffectual bevy of policemen add a plot hinging on the technicalities of having a birthday on the 29th of February... What could possibly go wrong?

**Tour Dates**

**TOUR 1 (A Little Bit of *Iolanthe*, The *Mikado* and The *Gondoliers*)**

**Eden Court, Inverness 10 , 11, 12, 13 June**

**Aden Country Park, Mintlaw, Aberdeenshire 17 June**

**Baird Park, Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire 18 June**

**Haddo House, Ellon, Aberdeenshire 19 June**

**Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock 26, 27 June**

**Queen’s Park Arena, Glasgow 30 June**

**Heart of Hawick 3 July**

**Harestanes Visitor Centre, Jedburgh 4 July**

**Oban High School 16, 17 July**

**Albert Halls, Stirling 20, 21 July**

**South Inch Car Park, Perth 22, 23 July**

**Glamis Castle, Forfar 24 July**

**Edinburgh Zoo 28 July**

**Festival Theatre Courtyard, Edinburgh 29-31 July, 1 August**

**Slessor Gardens, Dundee 7, 8 August**

**Scottish Opera Production Studios, Edington St 13, 14, 15 August**

**TOUR 2 (A Little bit of *HMS Pinafore* and *The Pirates of Penzance*)**

**Strathpeffer Pavilion 17 July**

**Craigmonie Centre, Drumnadrochit 20 July**

**Nevis Centre, Fort William 21 July**

**Gynack Gardens, Kingussie 22 July**

**Ullapool High School 23 & 24 July**

**Tong Community Centre, Isle of Lewis (hosted by An Lanntair) 27 July**

**Sporsnis in Lionel, Ness, Isle of Lewis (hosted by An Lanntair) 28 July**

**Grinneabhat Centre in Bragar, Isle of Lewis (hosted by An Lanntair) 29 July**

**Belleisle Estate, Ayr, South Ayrshire 4 & 5 August**

**Fullarton Estate, Troon, South Ayrshire 6 August**

**East Kilbride Arts Centre 7 August**

**Crichton Memorial Church, Dumfries 18 & 19 August**

**Musselburgh Racecourse (hosted by The Brunton) 21 & 22 August**

**Glamis Castle, Forfar 28 August**

**And further dates to be confirmed**

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.

Scottish Opera is core funded by The Scottish Government

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**For additional press details please contact:**

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