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##### Press Release

11 January 2023

#### PUPILS IN FOR A SCARE WITH scottish opera’S PRIMARY SCHOOLS show

#### *THE curse of maccabbra opera house*

Scottish Opera’s primary schools production, *The Curse of MacCabbra Opera House*, begins its sold-out tour around Scotland in February and, for the very first time, is also available for only £100 as a digital only learning and teaching experience.

A chilling tale with a good dose of comedy, *The Curse of MacCabbra Opera House* features music from composer **Alan Penman** and lyrics from writer and director **Johnny McKnight.** The30-minute gothic horror opera for P5-P7 will be performed until June in schools all over Scotland, as well as in five Newcastle primaries.

Schools can take part in the project two ways: as a digital only learning and teaching experience using online resources Scottish Opera provides to prepare pupils for all aspects of presenting a performance to an audience, or a hybrid digital and live learning and teaching experience for up to 100 pupils. If schools choose the hybrid version, on the morning of the workshop, Scottish Opera’s team of musicians, singers and drama specialists spend four hours working with pupils to rehearse and perform a show in their school for classmates, friends and family, complete with fabulous costumes.

The online resources are available now from Scottish Opera’s website, and provide everything teachers need to prepare their pupils for a performance in their own school for family and friends. They can simply download a PDF of the lyrics and score, videos and audio files to rehearse the songs and dance moves. These include easy-to-follow teaching aids for the five songs in *The Curse of MacCabbra Opera House*, alongside fun curriculum-based learning activities which can be carried out in class, assigned as homework tasks or used for assessment purposes. Learning activities will cover marketing and publicity, ticket pricing, letting children try their hand at creative writing and costume design, giving them an insight into all the different work that goes on behind the scenes to bring an opera to the stage, and helping build excitement for their fabulous performance day.

*The Curse of MacCabbra Opera House* is designed to work in line with the Curriculum for Excellence to enhance lessons already taught in classrooms, and help staff implement some of its experiences and outcomes, using active and co-operative learning approaches. It provides development opportunities for the following attributes and capabilities of CfE’s four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. As well as Expressive Arts, the workshops and extension activities support Literacy & English, Health and Wellbeing, Numeracy and Maths and Technologies.

**Scottish Opera’s Education and Outreach programme has featured in Primary Schools for over 50 years,** and teachers from schools which have already taken part agree that the tour broadened the children’s cultural experiences, improved team work skills, increased cultural confidence as well as singing ability, and supported the aims of Curriculum for Excellence.

The production follows writers Compo Zerr and Libby Retto as they work late into the night to finish their new opera at the MacCabbra Opera House. But there’s more to their helpful host Dee Parton than meets the eye, and as the clock strikes midnight the singers, workers and critics of the old Opera House rise from their graves to give Compo and Libby some horrifying help! Can Compo and Libby hold their nerve to finish their masterpiece? Will the singers get to put on one final performance? Will the workers revolt? Are the critics just revolting?

Scottish Opera Director of Education and Outreach **Jane Davidson MBE** said: ‘Scottish Opera is delighted to announce an exciting new development to their awarding winning Primary Schools programme: stage an opera with 100 pupils for only £100! *The Curse of MacCabbra Opera House* also gives pupils the opportunity to explore many other front of house and backstage activities that are an essential part of creating a successful show, making Scottish Opera’s primary tour one of the most integrated cross curricular learning experiences in the school calendar.

‘We’re thrilled to the bone to introduce this creepy and kooky opera to second level pupils across the country and even better, schools can involve 100 or more of their pupils for the digital resource pack costing just £100. Located in a gloomy Highland glen, the long forgotten MacCabbra Opera House’s doors are creaking open once more to welcome a new generation of young performers. Come up with us if you dare; meet the mysterious Madame Dee Parton and the cast and company of the opera as they race to stage a new opera before the sun comes up!’

For more details about *The Curse of MacCabbra Opera*, visit [www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-curse-of-maccabbra-opera-house/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-curse-of-maccabbra-opera-house/)

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[www.scottishopera.org.uk](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/)

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

Creative team

Composer **Alan Penman**

Lyrics **Johnny McKnight**

Illustrations **Iain Piercy**

Costumes **Trish** **Kenny**

Original Curriculum Notes **Sue Moody (2013)**

Updated and Amended Notes **Nicola Fisher (2022)**

**Performance diary**

6 February Broomhill Primary, Glasgow

7 February Corstorphine Primary School, Edinburgh

8 February Towerbank Primary, Edinburgh

9 February St John's RC Primary, Edinburgh

10 February St Elizabeth’s Primary, South Lanarkshire

15 February Wallacestone Primary, Falkirk

16 February Broomhill Primary, Glasgow

17 February Robert Smillie Memorial Primary School, South Lanarkshire

20 February Garrowhill Primary, Glasgow

21 February St Constantine's Primary, Glasgow

22 February Jordanhill Primary School, Glasgow

23 February Shawlands Primary, Glasgow

24 February Sunnyside Primary School, Alloa

27 February Eyemouth Primary School, Berwickshire

28 February Dalry Primary School, Edinburgh

1 March East Calder Primary School, West Lothian

2 March The High School of Glasgow, Glasgow

3 March Mosshead Primary School, East Dunbartonshire

6 March Tayport Primary School, Fife

7 March Newtonhill Primary School, Stonehaven

8 March Cluny Primary School, Moray

9 March Hopeman Primary School, Moray

10 March Mosstowie Primary, Moray

13 March Springholm, Lochrutton and Hardgate Primary Schools, Dumfries &

Galloway

14 March Crossmichael, Gelston, Dalry and Kells Primary Schools, Dumfries &

Galloway

15 March Kirkgunzeon, Palnackie, Colvend, Borgue and Auchencairn Primary

Schools, Dumfries & Galloway

16 March Castle Douglas Primary School, Dumfries & Galloway

17 March Calside Primary School, Dumfries & Galloway

20 March Flora Stevenson Primary School, Edinburgh

21 March Kettle Primary School, Fife

22 March Ladybank & Pitlessie Primary School, Fife

23 March St Timothy's Primary School, Glasgow

24 March Milngavie Primary School, East Dunbartonshire

27-31 March Dumfries & Galloway Council

17 April Sciennes Primary School, Edinburgh

18 April Carmyle Primary School, Glasgow

19 April South Morningside Primary, Edinburgh

20 April Fettes College, Edinburgh

21 April Baljaffray Primary School, East Dunbartonshire

25 April Dunbeg Primary School, Argyll & Bute

26 April Taynuilt Primary School, Argyll & Bute

27 April Bankhead Primary School, South Lanarkshire

28 April St Bartholomew's Primary, Castlemilk, Glasgow

2 May Dollar Academy, Clackmannanshire

3 May Bruntsfield Primary School, Edinburgh

4 May St Peter’s Primary School, Edinburgh

5 May Annanhill Primary School, Ayrshire

9 May Aberlour Primary School, Moray

10 May Keith Primary School, Moray

11 May Fyvie Primary School, Aberdeenshire

12 May Turriff Primary School, Moray

15 May Fraserburgh South, Aberdeenshire

16 May Northmuir Primary School, Kirriemuir, Angus

17 May Inverbrothock Primary School, Arbroath, Angus

18/19 May Burnside Primary School, Carnoustie, Angus

22 May Lanark Primary School, South Lanarkshire

23 May Stockbridge Primary School, Edinburgh

24 May Queensferry Primary School, Edinburgh

25 May Westquarter Primary School, Falkirk

30 May Sanday Primary School, Orkney

5 June Eaglesham Primary School, East Renfrewshire

6 June Highpark Primary School, Glasgow

7 June St Margaret's School for Girls, Aberdeen

8 June Durris Primary School, Aberdeenshire

9 June Rothes Primary School, Moray

12 June Ravenswood Primary School, Newcastle

13 June Benton Park Primary School, Newcastle

14 June Hotspur Primary School, Newcastle

15 June West Jesmond Primary School, Newcastle

16 June Cragside Primary and Chillingham Road Primary School, Newcastle

19 June Bishopmill Primary School, Moray

21 June Philiphaugh Primary School, Borders

Notes to Editors

**Scottish Opera**

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. The Company was founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson with the goal ‘to lay the treasures of opera at the feet of the people of Scotland’, opening with performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The 2022/23 season marks its 60th Anniversary.

Scottish Opera’s performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly-commissioned world premieres, balancing favourites with under-explored works. The Company collaborates with the world’s finest singers and creatives, together with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses for each opera. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards, a 2017 UK Theatre Award, and a 2020 RPS Award. The Company took operas to Brooklyn in 2017 and Adelaide in 2020, and the 2022/23 season sees productions first staged at Scottish Opera appearing in Santa Fe, Madrid, Toulouse, and Los Angeles. The 60th Anniversary Season includes the UK fully-staged premiere of Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* and the Company premiere of Puccini’s *Il trittico*.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland to ensure performances are within reach of as many of the country’s dispersed population as possible – this year, 60 locations across the length and breadth of the country. Specially-adapted 40-foot long trailers bring Pop-up Opera performances to thousands of people each year. This is one of the most extensive touring programmes of any European opera company and a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education & Outreach programme, the oldest in Europe, includes an annual in-person and digital Primary Schools Tour, bringing children the opportunity to perform their own specially-commissioned piece alongside 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 performances offering audio description and specially-devised shorter access performances.

Scottish Opera is committed to making opera for all, presenting opera at the highest possible standards in theatres across the country, outdoors on tour, and digital audiences around the world. The Company’s 2021 production of *The Gondoliers*, filmed live at Festival Theatre Edinburgh, is available on BBC iPlayer. Scottish Opera’s 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 Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore*, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, *Opera Highlights*, Menotti’s *The Telephone*, and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*. A new commission will be announced in 2023.

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