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**Press Release**

10 August 2023

**SCOTTISH OPERA’S *OPERA HIGHLIGHTS* TOURS THIS AUTUMN TO 17 VENUES ACROSS SCOTLAND**

A vibrant new production of *Opera Highlights* goes on the road again this autumn, visiting 17 venues around Scotland.

A troupe of talented singers perform in this one-of-a-kind show, created specifically for Scottish Opera each season. Mezzo-soprano **Katherine Aitken** (*The Verdi Collection* 2023) and baritone **Jerome Knox** (*The Fiery Angel* 2017) return to our stages, while soprano **Katy Thomson** and tenor **Innocent Masuku** make their Company debuts.

From 21 September, they will travel to Giffnock, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Strathmiglo, Newtonmore, Lossiemouth, Ardross, Thurso, Lochinver, Arisaig, Isle of Seil, Tillicoultry, Glasgow, Dumfries, Crawfordjohn, Maybole, and Musselburgh. Accompanying them on piano is Music Director **Toby Hession**, a former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist. Directed by **Laura Attridge** (*The Miserly Knight* and *Mavra* 2022), designs are by **Ana Inés Jabares-Pita**.

The playlist, devised by Scottish Opera’s former Head of Music **Derek Clark**, cleverly combines a fabulous collection of much-loved classics with a treasure trove of lesser-known pieces. These include music from Verdi’s *La traviata*, Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, Puccini’s *La bohème*, Arthur Sullivan’s *HMS Pinafore* and Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*, alongside works by Kurt Weill and William Walton. Audiences also have the chance to hear **Toby Hession** playing the world premiere of his short opera, entitled ‘In flagrante’.

Celebrating love and life, this production of *Opera Highlights* is set at a wedding, and the show explores the stories that happen in the margins of this kind of occasion. The characters – four guests and four staff members – will find their narratives interweaving as the day progresses, with audiences following them through a series of intimate exchanges via a rich programme of operatic gems. The variety of musical styles span three centuries of history, and include a series of arias, duets, trios, and quartets together with a delicate overarching narrative devised by the Company.

Director **Laura Attridge** said: ‘I’m so excited to be returning to Scottish Opera to direct the new *Opera Highlights* tour. It’s a programme depicting the intimacies and complexities of human relationships with bold, colourful brushstrokes, and I can’t wait to bring it to audiences on the road with a staging that makes its stories really sing.’

*Opera Highlights* is kindly supported by [**Friends of Scottish Opera**](https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/support-us/memberships/friends/),**JTH Charitable Trust** and **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust.**

Tickets are on sale now at [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/opera-highlights-202324/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/opera-highlights-202324/)

In the spring, Scottish Opera’s 2023/24 Emerging, and Associate, Artists **Inna Husieva**, **Lea Shaw**, **Monwabisi Lindi** and **Ross Cumming** tour the same *Opera Highlights* production from 11 February to 23 March to Greenock, Stirling, Ardrishaig, Blairgowrie, Peterhead, Aboyne, Strathpeffer, Tongue, Stornoway, Poolewe, Dornie, Ballachulish, Tobermory, Johnstone, Middleton, Duns, St Andrews and Largs. By the end of this tour, *Opera Highlights* will have visited 35 venues around Scotland. Tickets go on sale Winter 2023.

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

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**Creative team**

Director  **Laura Attridge**

Designer  **Ana Inés Jabares-Pita**

**Cast**

Soprano **Katy Thomson**

Mezzo Soprano **Katherine Aitken**

Tenor  **Innocent Masuku**

Baritone **Jerome Knox**

Music Director/Pianist **Toby Hession**

**Performance diary**

Thursday 21 September, Eastwood Park Theatre, Giffnock

Saturday 23 September, The Royal Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh

Tuesday 26 September, The Lemon Tree, Aberdeen

Thursday 28 September, Strathmiglo Village Hall

Saturday 30 September, Newtonmore Village Hall

Tuesday 3 October, Lossiemouth Town Hall

Thursday 5 October, Ardross Community Hall

Saturday 7 October, Thurso High School

Tuesday 10 October, Lochinver Village Hall

Thursday 12 October, Astley Hall, Arisaig

Saturday 14 October, Isle of Seil Community Hall

Tuesday 17 October, Devonvale Hall, Tillicoultry

Thursday 19 October, Cottiers Theatre, Glasgow

Saturday 21 October, Theatre Royal Dumfries

Tuesday 24 October, Crawfordjohn Village Hall

Thursday 26 October, Maybole Town Hall

Saturday 28 October, Loretto School Theatre, Musselburgh

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 marked 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 saw productions first staged at Scottish Opera appearing in Santa Fe, Madrid, Toulouse, and Los Angeles. The 60th Anniversary Season included 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 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*, Menotti’s *The Telephone*, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, *Mister MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep*, and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Renowned for their flexibility and craftsmanship, Scottish Opera productions are frequently presented by opera houses across the globe. Two of our 60th Anniversary productions are presented by Welsh National Opera: Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* is in Cardiff, Llandudno, Bristol, Plymouth, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Southampton from September to November 2023. Puccini’s *Il trittico* can be seen in Cardiff in June 2024.

Following on from a run at the Opera Comique in Paris, Detroit Opera perform our 2019 production of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves* in April 2024 (having just presented *Ainadamar).* In addition, our 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* is performed twice in Canada: at Vancouver Opera in February 2024, and at Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in April and May 2024.Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.

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