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##### Press Release

10 August 2023

**SCOTTISH OPERA PRESENTS SCOTTISH PREMIERE OF RICHARD STRAUSS’ *DAPHNE* IN GLASGOW,**

**BEFORE TOURING TO LAMMERMUIR FESTIVAL AND**

**EDINBURGH THIS AUTUMN AND WINTER**

This autumn, in partnership with Lammermuir Festival, Richard Strauss’ *Daphne* comes to the Scottish stage for the first time, conducted by Music Director **Stuart Stratford** and accompanied by **The Orchestra of Scottish Opera**.

Continuing the Company’s commitment to exploring and championing lesser known pieces by great composers, this new concert staging of the wistful one-act opera opens at Theatre Royal Glasgow on 5 September, then tours to St Mary’s Parish Church in Haddington on 7 September (as part of Lammermuir Festival), and to the Usher Hall in Edinburgh on 10 December.

These performances of *Daphne* feature **Hye-Youn Lee** *(Carmen* 2023) in the title role, **Shengzhi Ren** (*Don Giovanni* 2022), **Dingle Yandell** (*Thérèse* 2022)**, Catriona Hewitson** (*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* 2022), **Colin Murray** (*Carmen* 2023), **Francis Church** (*Utopia, Limited* 2022), with **Brad Cooper** and **Claire**

**Barnett-Jones** making their Company debuts. Also in the cast areScottish Opera Emerging Artists 2023/24 **Ross Cumming, Monwabisi Lindi** and **Inna Husieva.**

Director **Emma Jenkins** presents a tale of transformation, stolen innocence, and the need to stay true to one’s self, drawing on the unmistakable impressionist aesthetics (and threat) of Germany’s Weimar Republic in the years before the opera was composed. Richard Strauss keenly felt the political and artistic upheaval of this time, and the opera remained one of his personal favourites until his death.

Loosely based on Greek mythology as told in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Euripides’ *The Bacchae*, Strauss’ lush, bucolic score showcases The Orchestra of Scottish Opera in a journey of discovery, grief, and ultimately rebirth and release. The young Daphne feels at home nowhere so much as in nature. She loves the trees, sunlight, and flowers, but recoils at the idea of human romance, even when offered selflessly by her childhood friend Leukippos. Soon a mysterious stranger arrives, seeming to bring the power of the sun and to understand Daphne’s kinship with nature. When her father prepares a feast for the return of the gods, which he feels is imminent, Daphne’s otherworldly love comes up against all-too-human jealousies and struggles.

**Emma Jenkins** said of *Daphne*: ‘It’s a tricky piece to stage in many ways. Huge swathes of it are static arias in which the protagonists explore and unpack their emotions and inner conflicts – about 20 percent of the opera is Daphne singing solo. However, it is a hugely significant and deeply mystical piece that I think speaks to all of us. Although the story is from classical mythology, its message – the need to stay true to one’s beliefs no matter what the cost – is enduring and universal.’

**Stuart Stratford** said: ‘For every opera company, *Daphne* will always be a real challenge. The roles of Daphne and Apollo are incredibly taxing, and indeed the orchestral writing sees Strauss at his most virtuosic. The sumptuous, harmonic language is used brilliantly to weave and tell this bucolic story of loss of innocence. It is not to be missed!’

Lammermuir Festival’s Artistic Directors **Hugh Macdonald** and **James Waters** said: ‘Scottish Opera’s Scottish premiere of Richard Strauss’s spellbinding, late opera *Daphne* is something any festival would be proud to present. We are delighted to continue our partnership with them which brings rare and brilliant operatic treats to our Festival audiences.’

Lammermuir Festival, established in 2010 by Hugh Macdonald and James Waters, runs from 7 to 18 September in 12 beautiful locations around East Lothian. The festival won the 2017 Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Best Concert Series and Festival, and features several of Scotland's leading ensembles, internationally renowned musicians and exciting new talent. It has a close ongoing relationship with BBC Radio 3.

In March 2024, the Opera in Concert series continues with *The French Collection*. Few cities saw as much innovation and creative output in opera as Paris did during the 19th century. With three major opera houses and composers from France and further abroad vying for a coveted premiere at one (or more) of them, French opera contains a vast variety of musical and dramatic styles as its artists pushed boundaries on stage and in the pit. **Stuart Stratford** once again conducts this concert which includes excerpts from some of the era’s grandest and most beloved operas as well as its rarer gems that deserve a second hearing, including works by Georges Bizet, Charles Gounod and Jules Massenet.

The Orchestra of Scottish Opera captures the vivacity and grandeur of this uniquely brilliant musical epoch, accompanying singers **Alexandra Lowe**, **Catriona Morison**, **Alok Kumar (*Carmen* 2023) and Callum Thorpe.** This night of romance, drama and beautiful music will be performed in Caird Hall, Dundee and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall.

*Daphne* and *The French Collection* are supported by **Friends of Scottish Opera** and **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust**.

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

*Daphne* creative team

Conductor **Stuart Stratford**

Concert Staging **Emma Jenkins**

*Daphne* cast

Daphne **Hye-Youn Lee**

Leukippos **Shengzhi Ren**

Apollo  **Brad Cooper**

Peneios **Dingle Yandell**

Gaea **Claire Barnett-Jones**

Shepherd **Ross Cumming\*, Monwabisi Lindi\*, Colin Murray, Francis Church**

Maids **Catriona Hewitson, Inna Husieva\***

\*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2023/24

Performance Diary

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

5 September 2023, 7.30pm

**Lammermuir Festival**, **St Mary’s Church, Haddington** (part of Lammermuir Festival)

7 September 2023, 7.30pm

 More information is available at [www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk](http://www.lammermuirfestival.co.uk)

**Usher Hall, Edinburgh**

10 December 2023, 3pm

-ENDS-

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

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Notes to Editors

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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The Lammermuir Festivalwas founded in 2010, based on a conviction that historic architecture and

beautiful landscape are the ideal environment in which to experience great music and music-making. In 2017 it was the recipient of the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Society Award for Festivals and Concert Series. 2023 marks the 14th festival. Artistic Directors are Hugh Macdonald and James Waters, and its patron is pianist, Steven Osborne. The 2023 Lammermuir Festival is supported by Creative Scotland, Event Scotland and East Lothian Council.

**For additional press details please contact the Scottish Opera press office:**

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