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##### Press Release

24 April, 2024

**SCOTTISH OPERA YOUNG COMPANY PRESENT WORLD PREMIERE OF *RED* THIS SUMMER IN GLASGOW**

This July, Scottish Opera Young Company is presenting the world premiere of *RED,* a darkly comedic piecedrawn from fairy tales by The Brothers Grimm, at the Company’s Production Studios in Glasgow.

An interwoven story of the four stages of women’s lives that often feature in folk tales, *RED* is by award-winning composer **Karen MacIver**, with a libretto by Scottish Opera’s Director of Outreach and Education, **Jane Davidson** MBE. The conductor is Young Company’s Artistic Director **Chris Gray**, with **Flora Emily Thomson** (*Maud* & *Down in the Valley* 2023 and *As The Seasons Turn* 2022) returning to direct the 14 young performers aged between 17 to 21. Set and costume designs are by **Finlay McLay**.

*RED*  is inspired by Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel, Snow White and Hansel & Gretel, and features aspects of the ages of unnamed female figures — girl, maiden, mother, crone — that often appear in these famous stories. The 70-minute opera examinesthe circular, metamorphic nature of these tales as well as experiences shared by generations of women across time through magical realism.

**Karen MacIver** and **Jane Davidson** said: ‘*RED* is an exploration of the some of the key defining characteristics of the female protagonist in stories – bringing the tradition from its beginnings in folk tales and right up to contemporary interpretations. Women are judged by a different set of values, and many still face the unenviable choices of relationships (family) versus personal aspiration. In more recent times, the medium of stage and film – and of music composed for these – has gained dominance in terms of how we experience storytelling.

‘Stephen Sondheim and Bernard Herrmann are masters in the art of musically driven plots. Their works have greatly influenced the score, not only in the musical choices made, but also as a guiding light for compelling storytelling in terms of the landscape of sound. Literary influences include Margaret Atwood, whose beautifully concise, darkly humorous style, with twists and turns at the most unexpected of moments, we have tried to capture in the libretto. Working within the parameters of four short acts drove the need for a musical score that describes the plot every bit as much as the words. Interspersed throughout are strands of magical realism, lending an everyday quality to the more outrageous aspects of the story arc that we are confident most of the audience will recognise. So, throw in some chatty crockery, firefighters with a nice line in barbershop singing, some 1980s shoulder padded glamour, a wolf that needs therapy and you might just get a sense of what to expect.’

Director **Flora Emily Thomson** said: ‘I’m so excited to be working with the Young Company again to bring to life *RED.* Karen MacIver and Jane Davidson’s intricate and charged piece is brimming with possibilities, compelling us to consider the relationship between women, power and patriarchy across a lifetime, and the shifts and sacrifices needed to navigate these. As we follow our protagonist through her ages, our ensemble uses dynamic and sensory movement to build her worlds and destroy them, constantly moving the goal posts and manipulating the parameters of her world. Taking place on a striking and stark, angular set, prepare to experience some of society’s oldest tales in a thoroughly modern way.’

Scottish Opera Young Company offers young singers a unique and practical introduction to the world of opera and the chance to develop their talent through a year-long programme, working with a range of music professionals. For many of the singers, it is the first step towards building a career in the arts, and gives them the opportunity to perform music written especially for young voices.

Tickets for *RED*, which issupported by **Scottish Opera’s Education Angels** and **The Rose Fund**, are available to buy now from [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/red](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/red)

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

You can follow Scottish Opera on X, Facebook, Instagram and Tik-Tok **@ScottishOpera**

RED creative team

Conductor **Chris Gray**

Director **Flora Emily Thomson**

Set and Costume Designer **Finlay McLay**

Performances

**Scottish Opera Production Studios, 40 Edington Street,** **Glasgow**

18 – 20 July, 7.15pm

21 July, 3pm

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*, which was nominated for an International Opera Award 2023.

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 were presented by Welsh National Opera: Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* was 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.

**For additional press details please contact:**

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