



PRESS RELEASE

3 August 2016

THE SUNDAY SERIES: OPERA IN CONCERT OPENS WITH MASCAGNI'S *L'AMICO FRITZ*

Throughout the 2016/17 Season, Scottish Opera presents four operas in concert as part of The Sunday Series at Theatre Royal Glasgow, beginning with Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz* on 23 October 2016 at 3pm.

Following the success of previous opera in concert performances, and the popularity of the 2015/16 Sunday afternoon concerts, this Season's Sunday Series features early and lesser-known works by masters of operatic writing.

Curated by Scottish Opera's Music Director **Stuart Stratford**, the performances complement the Season's staged productions. As well as Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*, the Series features Debussy's *L'enfant prodigue*, Rossini's *La scala di seta*, and Puccini's *Le Villi*, the last of which will be a Scottish premiere.

Mascagni's rarely-performed second work *L'amico Fritz* – which was written hot on the heels of the ever-popular *Cavalleria rusticana* – opens the Series and features rich, lyrical music including the much-loved 'Cherry Duet'.

The story follows Fritz Kobus, a wealthy landowner, who has declared that he shall never take a wife. Doubting his sincerity, Fritz's friend David proposes a wager. The race is on to see if Fritz wins the bet or if someone steals his heart first.

Bringing this passionate, romantic drama to life is an incredible cast featuring **Peter Auty, Paul Curievici, Stephen Gadd, Hanna Hipp, Natalya Romaniw** (*Rusalka* 2016), Scottish baritone **Donald Maxwell** and Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Hazel McBain**. They are joined by a chorus and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, under the baton of **Stuart Stratford**.

Stuart Stratford said: 'Mascagni is undoubtedly one of the most underrated operatic composers ever. Unlike his contemporary, Puccini, his music is often overlooked. I am delighted to be presenting the heartfelt and charming *L'amico Fritz*, which contains some of Mascagni's most sensational vocal writing.'

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

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Cast and Creative Team

Conductor	Stuart Stratford
Fritz Kobus	Peter Auty
Suzel	Natalya Romaniw
Beppe	Hanna Hipp
Federico	Paul Curievici
Hanezo	Donald Maxwell
David	Stephen Gadd
Caterina	Hazel McBain*

*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist

Performance Diary for The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert

Theatre Royal Glasgow, 282 Hope Street, Glasgow G2 3QA

Mascagni's *L'amico Fritz*

23 Oct 2016, 3pm

Debussy's *L'enfant prodigue*

5 Feb 2017, 3pm

Rossini's *La scala di seta*

2 Apr 2017, 3pm

Puccini's *Le Villi*

21 May 2017, 3pm

La scala di seta is also performed at **Perth Concert Hall** on **7 Apr 2017, 7.30pm**

Notes to Editors

Stuart Stratford's biography:

Stuart was appointed Music Director of Scottish Opera from 1 June 2015.

Stuart Stratford read music at Trinity College, University of Cambridge, studying conducting with David Parry. He also spent three years studying with the legendary conducting teacher, Ilya Aleksandrovich Musin, at the Saint Petersburg State Conservatoire, Symphonic and Operatic Conducting Faculty. He was the Junior Fellow in Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, in 1999 and 2000.

Opera is at the core of his activities. In the UK Stuart has conducted for English National Opera, Opera North, Welsh National Opera, Birmingham Opera Company and Buxton Festival, as well as Scottish Opera, with repertoire including *Giovanna d'Arco*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Khovanshchina*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Don Giovanni*, *Satyagraha*, *Pagliacci*, *A Midsummer Night's*

Dream, Faust, The Turn of the Screw, Falstaff, La Boheme, Candide, Swanhunter (Dove), *Tobias and the Angel* (Dove), *Ion* (Param Vir), *Kantan* (Goehr), *L'altra Euridice* (Dove), *Ariadne* (Langer), and *The Embalmer* (Batistelli). He has given the world staged premiere of *The Maiden in the Tower* (Sibelius) and the UK staged premiere of *Kashchei the Immortal* (Rimsky-Korsakov).

He is a regular conductor at Opera Holland Park and has conducted performances of *Eugene Onegin, The Queen of Spades, Jenůfa, Iolanta, Káťa Kabanová, La Forza del Destino, L'amico Fritz, Rigoletto, Lucia di Lammermoor, Cavalleria Rusticana, Pagliacci, La Fanciulla del West* and *Il Trittico*.

Outside the UK, Stuart has worked at the Finnish National Opera (*Doctor Atomic*), Hong Kong (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), at Theater St. Gallen, Switzerland (*Un Ballo in Maschera*), and at the Birgitta Festival with the Estonian National Opera (*Faust*).

He has conducted concerts with many of the UK orchestras including the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia, London Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, Manchester Camerata and Viva Sinfonia.

Abroad Stuart works with the Porto Symphony Orchestra, Remix Ensemble, Orchestra of the Algarve, Perm Opera and Ballet Theater, Ural Symphony Orchestra in Yekaterinburg where he gave the Russian premiere of *Momentum* (Turnage) and *Airport Scenes* (Dove). With the Australian Chamber Orchestra in Sydney he has recorded a joint Channel 4 and Australian Broadcasting Corporation film opera, *The Eternity Man*, which was broadcast in both the UK and Australia.

Scottish Opera biography:

Scottish Opera is Scotland's national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. It was founded by Alexander Gibson in 1962 and was inaugurated with a production of *Madama Butterfly* at the King's Theatre in Glasgow.

Notable achievements include the world premiere of James MacMillan's *Inés de Castro* at the 1996 Edinburgh International Festival and complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production. Recent commissions include *Five:15 Operas Made in Scotland* (2008-10); *The Lady from the Sea*, *Clemency*, the double bill of *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* (winner of a South Bank Sky Arts Award) which premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival and 2016's *The Devil Inside* by Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh.

Scottish Opera is committed to bringing the widest possible range of opera, performed to the highest possible standards, to the maximum audience throughout Scotland and the UK. Each year it performs in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness, as well as smaller theatres, village halls and community centres throughout the country.

Scottish Opera's Education and Outreach Department was the first of its kind of any opera company in Europe. It operates an extensive programme which involves over 10,000 primary school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and free *Unwrapped* taster sessions.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



For additional press details please contact:

Emily Henderson, Press Manager, 0141 242 0511, emily.henderson@scottishopera.org.uk

Eilidh Clark, Press Officer, 0141 242 0552, eilidh.clark@scottishopera.org.uk