



PRESS RELEASE

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5 July 2016

## **SCOTTISH OPERA MUSIC DIRECTOR STUART STRATFORD TAKES TO THE ROAD FOR *THE ELIXIR OF LOVE* NATIONAL TOUR**

Tickets are now on sale for Scottish Opera's new production of *The Elixir of Love*, Donizetti's sunny comedy which tours to 17 venues around the country from September. The Company's Music Director, **Stuart Stratford** – who attracted rave reviews for his work on *Rusalka* and Opera Holland Park's *Iris* earlier this year – conducts the first six performances of this lively opera. **Derek Clark**, Scottish Opera's Head of Music, takes over on the remaining dates.

Young British director **Oliver Platt** and designer **Oliver Townsend** (*Rodelinda* 2013) take inspiration from the world of PG Wodehouse for their staging of *The Elixir of Love* which opens in Motherwell before travelling to Stirling, Elgin, Ullapool, Stornoway, Thurso, Drumnadrochit, Ellon, Langholm, Newton Stewart, Kilmarnock, Greenock, Oban, St. Andrews, Perth, Galashiels and Musselburgh.

**Ellie Laugharne** (*The Pirates of Penzance* 2013) takes on the role of Adina and is joined by Welsh tenor **Elgan Llyr Thomas**, winner of 2015's prestigious Stuart Burrows International Voice Award, and acclaimed baritone **James Cleverton**. Five players from The Orchestra of Scottish Opera will accompany the singers in a new instrumental arrangement by **Derek Clark**. Audiences can look forward to a decidedly tongue-in-cheek take on Donizetti's lyrical score, highlights include 'Una furtiva lagrima' and Dulcamara's patter songs.

**Stuart Stratford** said: '*The Elixir of Love* is full of fantastic melodies, a witty plot and it is shot through with a bolt of Italian sunshine which permeates all of the music. I am very excited to be conducting this new chamber realisation of the score arranged by our Head of Music **Derek Clark**, and can't wait to visit the further reaches of our country to share this incredible piece with the people of Scotland.'

Director **Oliver Platt** added: '*Elixir* offers a joyous couple of hours of escape. It is the perfect opera: boisterous, fun-filled and fast-paced, with the ideal mixture of comedy and romance.'

-ENDS-

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

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

#### Cast List

|              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| Adina        | <b>Ellie Laugharne</b>    |
| Nemorino     | <b>Elgan Llyr Thomas*</b> |
| Belcore      | <b>Toby Girling</b>       |
| Dr Dulcamara | <b>James Cleverton</b>    |
| Giannetta    | <b>Hazel McBain*</b>      |

#### Creative Team

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Conductors | <b>Stuart Stratford and Derek Clark</b> |
| Director   | <b>Oliver Platt</b>                     |
| Designer   | <b>Oliver Townsend</b>                  |

|                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Lighting                 | <b>Mark Howland</b>    |
| Movement Director        | <b>Jim Manganello*</b> |
| Instrumental arrangement | <b>Derek Clark</b>     |
| Translation              | <b>Kelley Rourke</b>   |

**\*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist**

Performance Diary

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Wed 21 Sep 7.30pm | <b>Motherwell Concert Hall</b>          |
| Sat 24 Sep 7.30pm | <b>Macrobert Arts Centre, Stirling</b>  |
| Mon 26 Sep 7.30pm | <b>Elgin Town Hall</b>                  |
| Thu 29 Sep 7.30pm | <b>Macphail Centre, Ullapool</b>        |
| Sat 1 Oct 7.30pm  | <b>An Lanntair, Stornoway</b>           |
| Tue 4 Oct 7.30pm  | <b>High School, Thurso</b>              |
| Thu 6 Oct 7.30pm  | <b>Craigmonie Centre, Drumnadrochit</b> |
| Sat 8 Oct 7.30pm  | <b>Haddo House, Ellon</b>               |
| Tue 11 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Buccleuch Centre, Langholm</b>       |
| Thu 13 Oct 7.30pm | <b>The Cinema, Newton Stewart</b>       |
| Sat 15 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Palace Theatre, Kilmarnock</b>       |
| Tue 18 Oct 7.30pm | <b>The Beacon Arts Centre, Greenock</b> |
| Thu 20 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Corran Halls, Oban</b>               |
| Sat 22 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Byre Theatre, St Andrews</b>         |
| Tue 25 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Perth Concert Hall</b>               |
| Thu 27 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Volunteer Hall, Galashiels</b>       |
| Sat 29 Oct 7.30pm | <b>Brunton Theatre, Musselburgh</b>     |

**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, Scottish Opera, Birmingham Opera Company and Buxton Festival 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.

## Notes to Editors

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.



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