



PRESS RELEASE

5 September 2017

TCHAIKOVSKY'S *IOLANTA* OPENS THE SUNDAY SERIES: OPERA IN CONCERT

The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert begins with Pytor Ilyich Tchaikovsky's heartfelt and tender work, *Iolanta*, on Sunday 29 October, in Theatre Royal Glasgow, at 3pm.

Scottish Opera's Music Director **Stuart Stratford** has once again curated The Sunday Series which focuses this Season on his love of, and expertise in, Russian music.

He will conduct **Gulnara Shafigullina** (*La traviata* 2017) in the title role of *Iolanta*, a young blind girl kept in seclusion who is unaware of her condition until she falls in love and her eyes are opened in every sense. Also in the cast are soloists **Alexey Dolgov**, **Ashley Holland**, **Nadine Livingston**, **Anne-Marie Owens**, **James Platt**, **Alexei Tanovitski** and Scottish Opera Emerging Artists **Alexey Gusev** and **Laura Zigmantaite**. They are joined by a chorus and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

Iolanta — Tchaikovsky's last opera — which is part fairy tale, part parable, was originally premiered alongside his enormously popular ballet *The Nutcracker* and is rarely heard outside Russia.

Stuart Stratford said: 'Tchaikovsky's last opera is a rare treasure. It has all the harmonic and melodic sophistication of his 6th symphony and *The Nutcracker*, and yet projects its own tender and spiritual energy in a way which is completely different to anything he ever wrote. Join us — with our fabulous international Russian-speaking cast — on a journey to ask the question of what it is to truly see.'

Three further concerts are planned for this Season's Sunday Series: the second is a performance of Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* in collaboration with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland at City Halls Glasgow in December. Mikhail Agrest, resident for many years at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg, will conduct singers from the Conservatoire's opera course and student instrumentalists alongside professional soloists and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

In February at Theatre Royal Glasgow, *From Russia With Love* features singers from the National Opera Studio — the UK's leading training programme for young opera professionals which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. This semi-staged performance features a variety of Russian-themed repertoire, performed by The Orchestra of Scottish Opera.

The Sunday Series 2017/18 closes in May with a performance of two works by Rachmaninov: *Aleko* and *Francesca da Rimini*. Adapted from a poem by Pushkin, *Aleko* was Rachmaninov's first opera. This will be the first ever performance of Rachmaninov on the Scottish Opera stage and the Scottish premiere of *Francesca da Rimini*, a little-known opera telling a story of love and death with a plot drawn from Dante's *Inferno*.

-ENDS-

www.scottishopera.org.uk

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

Cast and Creative Team

Conductor	Stuart Stratford
Director	Jack Furness
René , King of Provence	Alexei Tanovitski
Robert , Duke of Burgundy	Alexey Gusev*
Count Vaudémont	Alexey Dolgov
Ibn-Hakia	Ashley Holland
Alméric	Aled Hall
Bertrand	James Platt
Iolanta	Gulnara Shafigullina
Marta	Anne-Marie Owens
Brigitta	Nadine Livingston
Laura	Laura Zigmantaite*

*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist

Performance Diary for The Sunday Series: Opera in Concert

Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*

29 Oct 2017, 3pm

Theatre Royal Glasgow

Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel*

3 Dec 2017, 3pm

City Halls Glasgow

National Opera Studio: *From Russia with Love*

25 Feb 2018, 3pm

Theatre Royal Glasgow

Rachmaninov's *Aleko* and *Francesca da Rimini*

6 May, 3pm

Theatre Royal Glasgow

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 bohème*, *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 8,000 primary

school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and *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

Daisy Bartlett, Press Officer, 0141 242 0522, daisy.bartlett@scottishopera.org.uk