

22 September 2017

## **SCOTTISH OPERA TRAVELS TO CHINA TO PERFORM OPERA WITH 900 SCHOOL CHILDREN FOR AN AUDIENCE OF THOUSANDS**

A team from Scottish Opera's Education Department is travelling to Beijing in October to stage a show about the Emperor of China's Terracotta Warriors.

900 pupils from Fang Cao Di International School will take part in workshops with the Company's arts education specialists for a week, before performing the imaginative cross-curricular show *Warriors! The Emperor's Incredible Army* on November 3, at Beijing Xiedao International Conference and Exhibition Centre.

*Warriors!* is composed by **Alan Penman** with lyrics by **Ross Stenhouse**. Pupils learn the words and songs in their own classrooms and are then helped by the Scottish Opera team to prepare for a performance in front of classmates, friends and family.

The production tells the true story of Qin Shi Huang, the first Emperor of China, who was desperate to rule forever. Over many years, Qin Shi Huang assembled an army of 8000 soldiers, horses and chariots to watch over him in the afterlife. All the warriors were armed to the teeth, but were made entirely of clay.

*Warriors! The Emperor's Incredible Army* was originally commissioned in 2015 in partnership with the five Scottish Confucius Institutes based in the Universities of Edinburgh, Strathclyde, Glasgow, Heriot Watt and Aberdeen, and this is the second time the production will be performed by pupils from Fang Cao Di International School. In 2016, around 200 pupils learnt the songs and performed the opera, which is mainly sung in English with some words in Mandarin. The 'pilot' visit was deemed such a success by the teachers

that the team from Scottish Opera was invited to return and work with a cast of pupils nearly four times larger for one gigantic performance.

**Scottish Opera's Director of Education and Outreach, Jane Davidson** said: 'Our annual Primary Schools Tour is one of the longest established programmes at Scottish Opera – every year around 8,500 children across Scotland take part in these performances with many more thousands friends and families coming to see them in action. We are delighted to be invited to bring our interpretation of one of the most iconic figures in Chinese history, Qin Shi Huang, to Beijing and we hope that Chinese pupils enjoy performing *Warriors! The Emperor's Incredible Army* as much as their Scottish counterparts.'

**Mr. Fei Liu, Headteacher at Fang Cao Di School** added: 'This collaboration with Scottish Opera was inspired by their unique approach towards learning and teaching in schools, which promotes the benefits of cross curricular learning through the artform of opera: the component elements of music, visuals, movement and storytelling support pupils' understanding of a wide range of core curriculum subjects. This chimes with our school's philosophy and our curriculum which includes ethics, mathematics, science, technology, wellbeing and the arts and aims to cultivate in pupils an affection for China and an international vision, so we are looking forward to working together for this special performance of *Warriors!*

Scottish Opera was this week awarded Confucius Classroom Hub status by Hanban, the headquarters of Confucius Institutes worldwide, making it the first opera company in the world to be selected for this accolade. It is one of four new hubs based outwith a school setting; the others are the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the Scottish Schools Football Association and the Royal Zoological Society at Edinburgh Zoo.

Scottish Opera will be opening its own 'classroom' at the Company's Edington Street production studios, where resources on Chinese performance, arts and culture will be kept. It will be used as a rehearsal space for Chinese-related programmes.

Confucius Classrooms are hubs usually based in schools and serving the local community. The concept promotes joint planning of cultural activities, sharing ideas and resources to stimulate the learning and teaching of Chinese language and culture.

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

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**PHOTO:** The attached photo shows the *Warriors! The Emperor's Incredible Army* team with pupils from Fang Cao Di International School in Beijing, in 2016.

## Creative Team

<b>Music</b>	Alan Penman
<b>Words</b>	Ross Stenhouse
<b>Original Costume Design</b>	Trish Kenny

## Performance Team

Alan McKenzie  
Jamie Macdonald  
Lee Reynolds

## 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 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.

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