



PRESS RELEASE

22 March 2018

SCOTTISH OPERA'S BAMBINO RETURNS TO EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE AND TOURS TO PARIS AND AROUND SCOTLAND

Following sell-out runs in Edinburgh and Glasgow in 2017, the five star 'opera for babies' *BambinO* is touring to Edinburgh Festival Fringe this year, as well as Paris and five venues around Scotland.

Written by Scottish Opera's former Composer in Residence **Liam Paterson** and directed by Improbable's critically-acclaimed **Phelim McDermott**, the pioneering and unique piece of music theatre for infants aged 6 to 18 months is a co-production with Manchester International Festival and Improbable.

BambinO returns to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August with performances taking place once again at Edinburgh Academy. Tickets for the Edinburgh dates are available to buy from today (March 22). The show is then presented by Théâtre du Châtelet in various Paris venues from 6 to 20 April. This busy year for *BambinO* will finish with a tour in the Autumn to Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth, Motherwell and Lerwick.

BambinO celebrates the possibilities of music and the power of the infant imagination by reinventing operatic language and traditions for children at an age when their minds are wide open to new sounds, images and experiences. Babies are free to explore during the performance, and to interact with the singers and each other.

Director **Phelim McDermott**, said: '*BambinO* has gone down a treat with our tiny audiences and it has been fascinating to see their reactions. With some mimicking the sounds made by the singers and others dancing along to the beat, it certainly looks like they're enjoying it. Adults get the chance to experience opera in a new way too, through the eyes and ears of the babies.'

Former Scottish Opera Composer in Residence, **Liam Paterson**, continued: '*BambinO* is a little opera with a big heart, bringing all the operatic passions to the youngest of opera newcomers and their parents. Together with director Phelim McDermott and designers Giuseppe Belli and Emma Belli, we have created a work that is as freshly experimental as it is in love with the grand traditions of opera. The smallest ears as well as the seasoned connoisseur will find something new and joyous in *BambinO*. And for adult opera newbies, it's not every day you get to have a truly new theatrical experience at the same moment as your baby!'

Scottish Opera's Director of Education and Outreach, **Jane Davidson**, said: 'This is a perfect opportunity to experience the highs and lows of opera, created in miniature, through the eyes and ears of your very own bambinos. Watch as babies and performers explore a beautifully crafted world full of golden eggs, soft blue cushions and soaring notes as a baby bird takes flight for the very first time.'

BambinO is commissioned and produced by Scottish Opera, Manchester International Festival and Improbable. It is supported by Scottish Opera's New Commissions Circle and Scottish Opera's Education Angels.

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www.scottishopera.org.uk

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

Cast and Creative Team

Composer **Liam Paterson**
Director **Phelim McDermott**
Designers **Giuseppe Belli & Emma Belli**

Paris cast

Ucellina **Charlotte Hoather**
Pulcino **Timothy Connor**
Cello **Laura Sergeant**
Percussion **Stuart Semple**

Edinburgh Festival Fringe and Scottish tour cast

Ucellina **Hazel McBain***
Pulcino **Samuel Pantcheff**
Cello **Andrew Drummond-Huggan**
Percussion **Michael D. Clark**

*Former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist

Performance Diary

Various venues in Paris presented by Théâtre du Châtelet

More information and tickets available from www.chatelet-theatre.com

Robertson Room, Edinburgh Academy (Part of Edinburgh Festival Fringe)

7 to 19 Aug (excl. Mon 13 Aug)

10am & 11.30am

Tickets available from March 22

Fringe Box Office, 180 High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1QS

0131 226 0000 or www.edfringe.com

Autumn 2018

6 – 22 Sep

Touring to Aberdeen, Inverness, Perth, Motherwell and Lerwick

Tickets on sale Summer 2018, more details from www.scottishopera.org.uk

Notes to Editors

Liam Paterson biography:

Liam Paterson, former Composer in Residence at Scottish Opera, is from Aberdeenshire. He trained at the University of Cambridge and as a répétiteur and accompanist at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Composition studies have included private lessons with Judith Weir and Errollyn Wallen; he is currently mentored by David Sawer and Nicola LeFanu. Liam Paterson won the 2017 Sunday Herald Culture Award for Best Musical Artist for his work with Scottish Opera which included *Opera Highlights*, *The 8th Door* and *Bambino*.

His work has been performed at Tête à Tête Opera Festival (Central St. Martin's), the St. Magnus Festival and Glasgow's Aye Write! Festival, where he presented a major song cycle based on poetry by the first Scots Makar, Edwin Morgan. Liam's music has been heard in venues ranging from Theatre Royal Glasgow to the Royal Festival Hall, London. In March 2017, Liam's new work for Scottish Opera, *The 8th Door*, had its world premiere in Glasgow. This specially devised companion piece to *Bluebeard's Castle* was directed by Matthew Lenton of Vanishing Point theatre company, and conducted by Sian Edwards.

Phelim McDermott biography:

Phelim McDermott is a founder member of Improbable and co-artistic director. Improbable company credits include *70 Hill Lane*; *Lifegame*; *Animo*; *Coma*; *Spirit*; *Sticky*; *Cinderella*; *The Hanging Man*; *Theatre of Blood* in collaboration with the National Theatre; *Panic*; *Beauty and the Beast* in co-production with ONEOFUS; *The Tempest*, a co-production with Northern Stage and Oxford Playhouse; *Opening Skinners Box*, a co-production with Northern Stage and West Yorkshire Playhouse and, most recently, *Lost Without Words*, a co-production with the National Theatre.

Also, for Improbable, Phelim has directed an array of operas such as Philip Glass' *Satyagraha*; *The Perfect American* and, most recently, *Akhmaten*, as well as Mozart's *Così fan tutte* in collaboration with English National Opera and the Metropolitan Opera.

Other productions he has directed include the Olivier Award winning *Shockheaded Peter*; *Alex* at The Arts Theatre; *The Ghost Downstairs* at Leicester Haymarket; *Dr Faustus* and *Improbable Tales* at Nottingham Playhouse and *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Government Inspector* at West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Scottish Opera:

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; complete Ring cycles at the 2003 Edinburgh International Festival, which won the 2004 South Bank Show Award for Best Opera Production; and the Achievement in Opera Award at the 2017 UK Theatre Awards for Sir David McVicar's production of Debussy's *Pelléas and Mélisande*. 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.

Manchester International Festival:

Manchester International Festival (MIF) is the world's first festival of original, new work and special events, staged every two years in Manchester, UK. MIF launched in 2007 as an artist-led festival presenting new works from across the spectrum of performing arts, visual arts and popular culture. MIF has commissioned, produced and presented world premieres by artists including Björk, Steve McQueen, Robert Wilson, Wayne McGregor, Maxine Peake, The xx, Zaha Hadid Architects, Damon Albarn, Punchdrunk, Elbow and Marina Abramović.

MIF brings together world-renowned artists from different art forms and backgrounds to create dynamic, innovative and forward-thinking new work, staged in venues across Greater Manchester – from theatres, galleries and concert halls to railway depots, churches and car parks. MIF works closely with venues, festivals and other cultural organisations around the world, whose financial and creative input helps to make many of these projects possible. The Festival also works widely within communities around Manchester, originally with MIF Creative and now with a new initiative called My Festival.

MIF's Artistic Director and CEO is John McGrath, previously the Founding Artistic Director of National Theatre Wales. Earlier this year, MIF was confirmed as the operator of Factory, a new £110 million cultural centre in Manchester due to open in 2020.

MIF is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

Improbable:

Improbable is led by Phelim McDermott and Lee Simpson and uses improvisation to create spectacular shows, support and nurture artists and the arts sector as a whole, and facilitate social change. We believe that art is for everyone and that our society needs a cultural shift that puts creativity at the heart of everyday life.

We create an astonishing breadth of work, from small-scale improvised shows to enormous outdoor spectacles; from our take on classic plays and operas to tours of new work that travel the UK and often the world. Alongside this, our Devoted & Disgruntled programme brings the arts community together to identify and work on shared issues; and our Participation programme takes improvisation to people and communities who may have had little contact with the arts before. We were founded in 1996 (becoming a charity in 2014), are based in London, and are a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England.

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