

11 February 2020

CITIZENS THEATRE'S DOMINIC HILL DIRECTS NEW PRODUCTION OF *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM* BY BENJAMIN BRITTEN

A new production of Benjamin Britten's atmospheric *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, directed by **Dominic Hill**, Artistic Director of Citizens Theatre, opens with three performances at Festival Theatre Edinburgh on 31 March, before transferring to Theatre Royal Glasgow for a further three performances.

Dominic, who last directed *Macbeth* for Scottish Opera in 2014, returns to the Company to bring his Shakespearean expertise in the telling of this tale of four lovers lost in the woods, fairies, magic and comedy, in an otherworldly mix of imagination and reality.

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts a dynamic cast that includes former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist, **Jennifer France**, widely praised for her performances in the Company's recent productions of *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Flight* and *Anthropocene*, and **David Shipley** (*Rigoletto* 2018), a recent graduate of the Royal Opera House's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme. They are both making their role debuts alongside countertenor **Morten Grove Frandsen**, a winner of Denmark's Reumert Talent Prize. Also in the cast is Scottish tenor and broadcaster, **Jamie MacDougall** (*Ariadne auf Naxos* 2018); former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Michel de Souza** (*The Cunning Little Vixen* 2011); **William Morgan** (*The Magic Flute* 2019); **Dingle Yandell** (*Tosca* 2019); **Victoria Simmonds** (*Flight* 2018) and two Emerging Artists, **Charlie Drummond** (*Iris* 2019) and **Mark Nathan** (*Opera Highlights* 2019). They are joined by a children's chorus.

Set in a post-war world, designs for the production are by **Tom Piper**, famed for the *Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red* installation at the Tower of London.

Audiences also have the chance to see a new work from Scottish Opera Composer in Residence, **Samuel Bordoli**, entitled *Hermia's Nightmare*. Conducted by **Timothy Burke**, it explores Shakespeare's text from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that Britten did not set. It will be performed in the theatre foyers before each show at 6.30pm.

Director **Dominic Hill** said: 'I am thrilled to be working again with Scottish Opera. Britten's opera has such a beguiling score and Shakespeare's text is one of my favourite of his plays. I can't wait to explore how Britten brings new depth and meaning to Shakespeare's play to create an exploration of the joys and pains of love – something that hopefully will be magical, funny and moving.'

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** added: 'From the glistening glissandi of the strings to the pungent aroma of the solo trombone, it is easy to understand why *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is viewed as a masterclass in orchestration and economy of gesture. With such minimal material, Britten can summon the mystery of the forest, effortlessly transition into the magic realm of Oberon and then collapse into the bustle and organised chaos of the amateur players. All of the vocal writing is exquisitely crafted, and it is true to say that the score is held dear by all those who have the fortune to bring this life affirming comedy to the stage.'

Those who wish to discover more about how the production was created can attend *A Midsummer Night's Dream Unwrapped*, one-hour tasters delving further into the show, as well as Pre-show Talks. Audience members with a visual impairment can enjoy the full opera experience at audio-described performances, which have a live commentary describing the action on stage without compromising the music.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is supported by Scottish Opera's Alexander Gibson Circle.

A Midsummer Night's Dream cast list

Oberon	Morten Grove Frandsen
Tytania	Jennifer France & Sofia Troncoso (23 Apr)
Hippolyta	Victoria Simmonds
Theseus	Trevor Eliot Bowes
Lysander	Anthony Gregory
Demetrius	Michel de Souza
Hermia	Clare Presland
Helena	Charlie Drummond*
Bottom	David Shipley
Quince	John Molloy
Flute	William Morgan
Snug	Dingle Yandell

Snout
Starveling

Jamie MacDougall
Mark Nathan*

* Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2019/20

A Midsummer Night's Dream creative team

Composer

Benjamin Britten

Conductor

Stuart Stratford

Director

Dominic Hill

Set & Costume Designer

Tom Piper

Lighting Designer

Lizzie Powell

Movement Director

Kally-Lloyd Jones

Puppet Design and Direction

Rachael Canning

Hermia's Nightmare cast list

Hermia

Clare Presland

Helena

Charlie Drummond*

Lysander

Anthony Gregory

Demetrius

Michel de Souza

Egeus

Jamie MacDougall

Theseus

Trevor Eliot Bowes

Hippolyta

Victoria Simmonds

* Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2019/20

Hermia's Nightmare creative team

Conductor

Timothy Burke

Director

Dominic Hill

Set and Costume Designer

Tom Piper

Movement Director

Kally-Lloyd Jones

Performance Diary

Festival Theatre, 13–29 Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9FT

Tue 31 Mar, 7.15pm

Thu 2 Apr, 7.15pm

Sat 4 Apr, 7.15pm

(*Hermia's Nightmare* performed at 6.30pm before each performance in Millburn Gallery, Foyer 2)

A Midsummer Night's Dream Unwrapped

Wed 1 Apr, 6pm

A Midsummer Night's Pre-show Talk

Sat 4 Apr, 6pm

A Midsummer Night's Dream Touch Tour

Sat 4 Apr, 6pm

A Midsummer Night's Audio-described performance

Sat 4 Apr, 7.15pm

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

Tue 21 Apr, 7.15pm

Thu 23 Apr, 7.15pm

Sat 25 Apr, 7.15pm

(*Hermia's Nightmare* performed at 6.30pm before each performance in Theatre Royal foyer)

A Midsummer Night's Dream Unwrapped

Wed 22 Apr, 6pm

A Midsummer Night's Dream Pre-show Talk

Sat 25 Apr, 6pm

A Midsummer Night's Dream Touch Tour

Sat 25 Apr, 6pm

A Midsummer Night's Dream Audio-described performance

Sat 25 Apr, 7.15pm

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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. In 1974 Scottish Opera purchased the Theatre Royal Glasgow, which reopened in 1975 as Scotland's first national opera house. The Orchestra of Scottish Opera was founded in 1980.

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*; and a Herald Angel for the European premiere of Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at the 2019 Edinburgh International Festival.

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* (premiered at the 2012 Edinburgh International Festival), 2016's *The Devil Inside*, with which Scottish Opera made its North American debut in Toronto, and 2019's *Anthropocene*. *Ghost Patrol* won a South Bank Sky Arts Award, and *In the Locked Room* and *Ghost Patrol* were nominated for an Olivier Award. In 2018, the company made its US debut with *Bambino* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and returned to the city's Brooklyn Academy of Music with Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek* later that year.

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 and dozens of other theatres, village halls and community centres. It also operates an extensive programme of outreach and education work which involves over 9,000 primary school children every year, as well as many other activities including adult learning and *Unwrapped* taster sessions. Scottish Opera receives core funding from the Scottish Government, as well as income from box office, and private and commercial support.



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