



PRESS RELEASE

12 June 2020

Scottish Opera Coronavirus update for 2020/21 Season

Today, General Director Alex Reedijk has announced that Scottish Opera will be unable to present their large-scale Autumn 2020 production due to the continuing uncertainty surrounding large gatherings due to Covid-19.

Preparation work was due to commence over the next few weeks for performances taking place in Theatre Royal Glasgow, Edinburgh Festival Theatre, Eden Court, Inverness and His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen.

Scottish Opera is continuing with plans to present the Spring 2021 large-scale production and will continue to take advice from the Scottish Government surrounding future plans for this.

The company are actively exploring an alternative plan of activity for the Autumn which may include a combination of digital and smaller live outdoor projects. An Audience Survey carried out suggested that audience members would be in support of this kind of project, with 93 percent willing to consider attendance at outdoor events.

Scottish Opera continue to work closely with venues, as well as representatives of the wider theatre industry in the UK, to look at the practicalities of rehearsing and performing in the future in a safe way.

However, the company are dedicated to continuing to provide quality online digital content for audiences. This includes the launch of the very first work in Scottish Opera's new Opera Shorts initiative, *The Narcissistic Fish*, premiering on Thursday 18 June at 7pm and a live performance of *Fever!*, our opera for primary school children, on Monday 22 June at 2pm.

General Director **Alex Reedijk** said: "Given the on-going requirements for social distancing it is simply not safe for our planned large-scale Autumn work to begin yet. We are as frustrated as all our audiences to not to be making and experiencing live performances, and assure you we will be back in our rehearsal rooms and theatres as soon as it is safe to do so.

"As you might imagine this is quite a change for our organisation, but a challenge we are genuinely relishing, and I look forward to sharing our programme of digital and outdoor events soon.

"We are very grateful for the UK Furlough scheme, which has enabled us to provide to most of our Scottish Opera family."

Ends

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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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