##### **Press Release**

30 APRIL 2021

**SCOTTISH OPERA CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS WITH FREE DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY PUPILS**

Scottish Opera is celebrating 50 years of its Outreach and Education department with an online version of its popular Primary Schools Tour, with FREE projects for Primary 1 to 7. Schools across the country can engage all primary pupils in an expressive arts project at the same time, with *The Brasketeers* for Primary 1 to 3, *Tiny Chef* for Primary 3 to 4 and *The Last Aliens* for Primary 5 to 7. Teachers will have access to videos, worksheets, lesson plans, audio guides and more, to guide pupils through a variety of fun and engaging curriculum-based activities. The learning resources use music and creative activities to explore maths, health, technology and environmental issues.

Each year Scottish Opera engages with 9,000 pupils from over 130 schools across Scotland, touring cross country from the likes of Glasgow and Edinburgh to Aberdeen, Dumfries, Fife and Inverclyde with its Primary Schools Tour. However, despite the pandemic putting limitations on this, the Company is determined to ensure children do not miss out on the experience by offering the learning resources digitally. Schools across the country can gain access to any of these resources for free until the end of 2021 on the Scottish Opera website.

Scottish Opera’s Director of Outreach and Education, **Jane Davidson** said: ‘Since 1971, Scottish Opera has remained committed to its mission of engaging and enriching the lives of children from all corners of Scotland through opera. We have witnessed first-hand how engagement with opera in schools can help young people to realise their own [creativity](https://www.tes.com/news/what-creativity-and-why-does-it-matter), while also supporting learning in a myriad of subjects. Never has it been so crucial to help young people [build emotional strength and resilience](https://www.tes.com/news/protecting-pupils-mental-health-covid-and-beyond). With positive musical experiences needed more than ever right now, we’re delighted to have created these free digital resources to ensure that we can continue to provide creative inspiration and support to young people across the country.’

A cross-curricular and interdisciplinary digital project for Primary 1 to 3, [*The Brassketeers*](https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-brassketeers/) introduces children to brass instruments while also supporting delivery of the Early and First Level numeracy curriculum. Resources include an animated short film performed by members of The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, alongside lesson plans, slide shows, worksheets and games which explore the relationship between music and maths.

Aimed at Primary 3 to 4 pupils, digital storybook project [*Tiny Chef*](https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/tiny-chef/)introduces Mandarin language skills alongside concepts of food preparation and healthy eating. Created in collaboration with the Confucius Institute for Scotland's Schools, over several weeks the Company worked with children to develop musical, artistic and narrative ideas which were developed by a composer, librettist and illustrator into the digital storybook, now available online for teachers to use.

For older children, digital performance project [*The Last Aliens*](https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-last-aliens/) invites Primary 5 to 7 pupils on an intergalactic adventure to save Planet Earth and engage with the topic of climate change as Scotland prepares to host the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26) later this year. With an opera of five songs for pupils to learn, teachers will be given a set of lesson plans, audio guides and demonstration films to explore the main topics, and teach music and movement, along with ideas for making props and costumes. There are also plans for digital collaborations with schools internationally and *The Last Aliens* live tour in the Autumn, should visiting groups to schools be allowed under Scottish Government Covid-19 guidelines.

Digital resources for the projects are available on the Scottish Opera website and are free to all until January 2022.

*The Last Aliens* is supported by The Mickel Fund, Harbinson’s Charitable Trust, The Hayward Sanderson Trust, The Educational Institute of Scotland and Scottish Opera's Education Angels. *The Brasketeers* is supported by The Educational Institute of Scotland and Scottish Opera's Education Angels.

**Notes to Editors**

*The Brasketeers* material is available online now at: <https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-brassketeers/>

*Tiny Chef* materials are available online now at: <https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/tiny-chef/>

Teachers can sign up to *The Last Aliens* now at: <https://www.scottishopera.org.uk/join-in/opera-for-schools/the-last-aliens/>

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland.

The Company's performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly-commissioned world premieres, working in collaboration with the world's finest singers and creatives, alongside The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards and a Herald Angel, as well as a 2020 RPS Award nomination.

Scottish Opera's work caters for audiences of all ages – ranging from babies to people living with dementia – and our Young Company and Emerging Artist programme support the talent of the future.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland, from the largest-scale theatres to rural venues with a capacity as low as 22, to ensure we are within reach of as many of our country's very dispersed population as possible. A miniature mobile opera house – literally, opera performed inside a converted 40-foot-long trailer on the back of a lorry – brings ‘Pop-up Opera’ performances to thousands of people each year in a range of inspiring and unexpected community locations. This represents the most extensive touring programme of any opera company in Europe and is a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education and Outreach programme, which celebrates 50 years in 2021, includes an annual Primary Schools Tour, bringing upper primary-aged children the opportunity to perform their own specially-commissioned piece, alongside three professional singers. Around 120 schools and 9,000 pupils take part each year.

Scottish Opera aims to be inclusive and affordable through availability of free and cheap tickets, as well as access performances including audio description, and performances which cater to those living with Dementia.

In the year to 31 March 2020, 116,960 people experienced Scottish Opera as audience members or as participants, across all of Scotland’s 32 Local Authority areas:

• 56 mainstage opera performances in Scotland plus tours to Belfast, London and Australia

• 8% of ticket buyers for mainstage opera performances in Scotland aged under 26

• 2,422 people watched specially-created opera productions for babies or toddlers

• 40,177 people participated in school’s workshops and performances

• 1,123 people living with Dementia participated in projects.

Scottish Opera is core funded by The Scottish Government

****

**For additional press details please contact:**

Julie McLaughlin, Press Officer, 0141 242 0552, **julie.mclaughlin@scottishopera.org.uk**