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##### Press Release

31 August 2021

**Scottish Opera Presents A New production of Gilbert & Sullivan’s**

***The Gondoliers* AND A Premiere of *Utopia, Limited***

A new Scottish Opera production of Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Gondoliers* opens at Theatre Royal Glasgow on Saturday 16 October before touring to Edinburgh, Inverness and London's Hackney Empire for a total of 24 performances.

This co-production with D'Oyly Carte Opera and State Opera South Australia includes the Scottish Opera premiere of the rarely seen *Utopia, Limited*. Three semi-staged concert performances of G&S’s penultimate opera take place in Glasgow, Edinburgh and London. *The Gondoliers* is also being filmed, and there will be an audio recording of *Utopia, Limited* both for future release.

Originally due to take place in May 2020, these productions mark a significant step forward in Scottish Opera’s return to theatres. Gilbert & Sullivan’s witty music and librettos are the perfect tonic after a difficult 18 months, offering audiences the chance to experience the joy of live performance once again. Delving into the satirical world of whimsy, Gilbert & Sullivan use their sparkling humour and glorious music to poke fun at the idea of monarchy, and the press and politics of their day.

Directed by **Stuart Maunder**, Artistic Director at State Opera South Australia, *The Gondoliers* satirises the ruling classes and their position within society, with the tale of two happy-go-lucky gondoliers who discover that one of them is the heir to the throne of a distant kingdom. In a show packed full of fun, the gondoliers set off to rule with an idealistic – if somewhat chaotic – plan. Set and Costume Designer **Dick Bird** embraces the absurdity of Gilbert’s libretto by bringing the story to life with fabulously inventive props – which are never quite what they seem – and exquisitely detailed costumes to transport audiences to Venice’s Grand Canal.

G&S aficionado, **Derek Clark**, Head of Music at Scottish Opera, conducts *The Gondoliers,* which is packed with favourites including the ‘A Regular Royal Queen’ quartet, ‘Take a pair of sparkling eyes’ and ‘Dance a Cachucha’. The ensemble cast includes ENO Harewood Artist **William Morgan**(*The Magic Flute*2019), former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Mark Nathan** (*Opera Highlights,* 2019), **Ellie Laugharne** (*The Elixir of Love* 2016), **Ben McAteer** (*The Mikado* 2016), **Sioned Gwen Davies** (*Falstaff* 2021*),* and G&S favourites **Yvonne Howard** and **Richard Suart** (*The Mikado*2016).

Also in the cast is former Emerging Artist **Arthur Bruce** (*L’elisir d’amore* 2021) along with 2021/22 Emerging Artist **Catriona Hewitson** (*L’elisir d’amore* 2021). Scottish Opera’s 2021/22 Emerging artists **Glen Cunningham** and **Lea Shaw** will also perform in the Access *Gondoliers* performances.

Performed by most of the cast of *The Gondoliers*, *Utopia, Limited* is similarly true to the Victorian style, mocking the British Empire and politics at the time of its creation. Set on the fictional island of Utopia, King Paramount’s dream of ‘civilising’ his people by adopting English ways backfires spectacularly, making way for a show packed with Gilbert’s rhyming dexterity and some of Sullivan’s most rewarding yet neglected music.

With only a handful of professional performances of *Utopia, Limited* since the original staging, this is an almost unique opportunity to experience live this rarity in the G&S canon. **Stuart Maunder** has adapted the libretto, along with a revised musical version by **Derek Clark**.

Director **Stuart Maunder** said: ‘*The Gondoliers* is a brilliant romp, with glorious music, a sumptuous design and a cast to die for. The G&S phenomenon has been part of the basic language of performing in the English speaking world for more than 150 years. So, this is the perfect chance for a whole new audience to experience one of the greatest pieces of music theatre and to revive a great tradition for a whole new generation. *The Gondoliers’* fusion of infectious melody, topsy-turvy wit and heartfelt sentiment is a combination that never ages – indeed, perhaps it’s something we need now more than ever. Opera relies on bringing people together in one place, at one time, to have a shared experience of the great works. Well, we’re back, ready, willing and champing at the bit to deliver this great piece.’

Conductor and Scottish Opera’s Head of Music, **Derek Clark**, said: ‘*The Gondoliers* is like a breath of Italian summer air. Gilbert’s witty book and lyrics show him at the top of his game and Sullivan, inspired by the Venetian setting, produced his sunniest score, with one lilting melody after another – all guaranteed to make you leave the theatre with a smile on your face. It’s pure joy from start to finish, exactly what is needed after a difficult year.’

For the very first time, Scottish Opera is offering Access Opera performances in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Inverness*.* These carefully curated, shortened versions of the opera are introduced by a narrator and feature cast and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera. Building on the Company’s ground-breaking dementia friendly opera performances, the shows are open to all and are suitable for anyone who might enjoy the flexibility and freedom to relax and move about as required. Tickets to these performances are free for school groups.

*The Gondoliers* and *Utopia, Limited* are supported by Scottish Opera’s ‘Play a Supporting Role’ Appeal and the recordings are supported by Garfield Weston Foundation (Weston Culture Fund).

Tickets for *The Gondoliers* and *Utopia, Limited* go on sale Wednesday 1 September 2021. For more information visit [**www.scottishopera.org.uk**](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk)

*The Gondoliers* cast list

Marco Palmieri **William Morgan**

Giuseppe Palmieri **Mark Nathan**

Gianetta **Ellie Laugharne** & **Charlie Drummond** (London

performances)

Tessa **Sioned Gwen Davies**

The Duchess of Plaza-Toro **Yvonne Howard**

The Duke of Plaza-Toro **Richard Suart**

Don Alhambra del Bolero **Ben McAteer**

(The Grand Inquisitor)

Casilda **Catriona Hewitson\***

Antonio **Arthur Bruce**

Luiz  **Dan Shelvey**

Inez **Cheryl Forbes**

Giorgio **Will Frost**

Fiametta **Zoe Drummond**

Vittoria **Frances Gregory**

Giulia **Grace Wain**

Francesco **Osian Wyn Bowen**

\* Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2021/22

*The Gondoliers* Creative Team

Conductors **Derek Clark** & **Jonathon Cole-Swinard** (22 & 31 Oct

 and 3, 6,12 &13 Nov. Access *Gondoliers* and 2.30pm

 performances)

Director **Stuart Maunder**

Set and Costume Designer **Dick Bird**

Lighting Designer **Paul Keogan**

Choreographer **Isabel Baquero**

Assistant Choreographer **Lucy Burns**

Performance Diary

***The Gondoliers***

Saturday 16 October, 7.15pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Thursday 21 October, 2.30pm and 7.15pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Friday 22 October, 3pm, Access *Gondoliers*, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Saturday 23 October, 2.30pm and 7.15pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Thursday 28 October, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Friday 29 October, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Saturday 30 October, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Sunday 31 October, 2.30pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Wednesday 3 November, 3pm, Access *Gondoliers*, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Thursday 4 November, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Saturday 6 November, 2.30pm and 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Wednesday 10 November, 7.15pm, Eden Court, Inverness

Thursday 11 November, 7.15pm, Eden Court, Inverness

Friday 12 November, 3pm, Access *Gondoliers*, Eden Court, Inverness

Saturday 13 November, 2.30pm and 7.15pm, Eden Court, Inverness

Wednesday 30 March 2022, 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

Thursday 31 March 2022, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

Saturday 2 April 2022, 2.30pm and 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

***Utopia, Limited***

Wednesday 20 October, 7.15pm, Theatre Royal Glasgow

Friday 5 November, 7.15pm, Festival Theatre, Edinburgh

Friday 1 April 2022, 7.30pm, Hackney Empire, London

-ENDS-

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

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

Notes to Editors

All productions are created and performed in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

The Company’s Opera on Screen productions are available to watch at: www.scottishopera.org.uk/what-s-on/opera-on-screen/.

The collection includes Donizetti’s *L’elisir d’amore*, Humperdinck’s *Hansel and Gretel*, Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, *Opera Highlights*, Janáček’s *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, Menotti’s *The Telephone* and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.
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. In 2021 the Company returned to live audiences with Sir David McVicar’s new production of Verdi’s *Falstaff* performed in Glasgow and at Edinburgh International Festival.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland, from the largest-scale theatres to the smallest of rural venues, to ensure we are within reach of as many of our country's very dispersed population as possible. Our specially-adapted 40-foot long trailer brings ‘Pop-up Opera’ performances to thousands of people each year in a range of inspiring and unexpected community locations. In the Summer of 2021 the Company performed over 200 shows of its Pop-up Opera Roadshow, to socially distanced audiences of over 8000. 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 performances offering audio description, and specially-devised shorter access performances.

Scottish Opera is core funded by The Scottish Government

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**For additional press details please contact:**

Emily Henderson, Press Manager, 0141 242 0511,**emily.henderson@scottishopera.org.uk**

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