

Opera On Your Doorstep: The Office Party

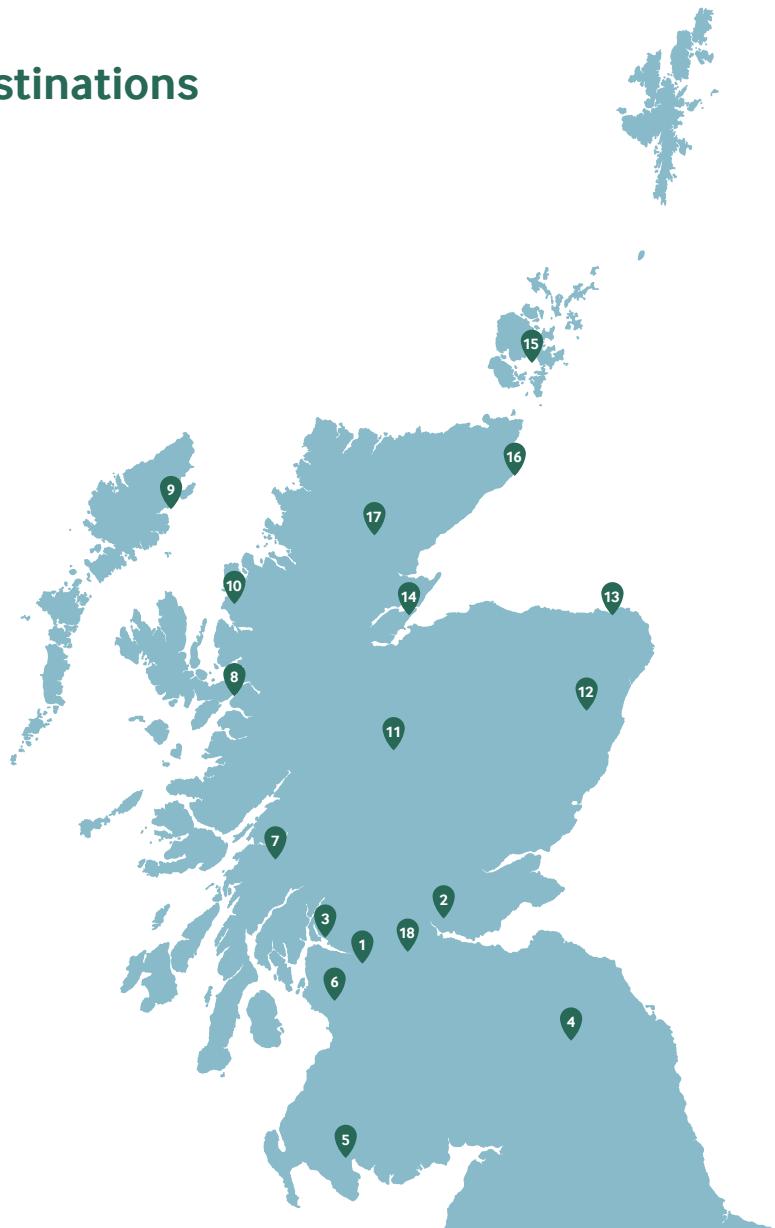


Scottish
Opera



Supported by
Friends of Scottish Opera
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Destinations



1 Tron Theatre, Glasgow
Tuesday 3 February

2 Devonvale Hall, Tillicoultry
Thursday 5 February

3 Hermitage Academy
Main Hall, Helensburgh
Saturday 7 February

4 Wauchope Hall, Town Yetholm
Tuesday 10 February

5 Newton Stewart Cinema
Thursday 12 February

6 Dunlop Village Hall
Saturday 14 February

7 Dalmally Community Centre
Tuesday 17 February

8 Dornie Community Hall
Thursday 19 February

9 An Lanntair, Stornoway
Saturday 21 February

10 Gairloch Community Hall
Tuesday 24 February

11 Newtonmore Village Hall
Thursday 26 February

12 The Barn Arts, Banchory
Saturday 28 February

13 Fraserburgh Leisure Centre
Tuesday 3 March

14 Cromarty Victoria Hall
Thursday 5 March

15 Orkney Theatre, Kirkwall
Saturday 7 March

16 Assembly Rooms, Wick
Tuesday 10 March

17 Lairg Community Centre
Thursday 12 March

18 Reconnect Regal Theatre,
Bathgate
Saturday 14 March

The 7 February performance is part of Helensburgh Music Society's Concert Series.



Welcome to *The Office Party*, the latest edition of Scottish Opera's annual *Opera Highlights* tour. It is a delight to take this newly created show to the doorstep of 35 communities – 17 last autumn and now 18 this spring, crossing Scotland from the Borders to the Islands.

Working from extracts selected by our Head of Music Fiona MacSherry, Director Emma Doherty (Assistant Director on *Oedipus Rex* and *Marx in London!*, both 2024) and Designer Kenneth MacLeod (*L'heure espagnole / The Bear* 2025) envision an office leaving party and love quadrangle with all the complicated relationships, emotions, and negotiations of these everyday situations. *The Office Party* is a familiar workplace dramedy, set to an operatic soundtrack!

Tonight is a wonderful chance to see some operatic rising stars. This tour's Music Director is Toby Stanford, one of our 2025/26 Emerging Artists. He evokes the sound worlds of Gounod, Handel, Strauss II, and Barber from the piano throughout every performance. Two fellow Emerging Artists – soprano Kira Kaplan (Access *La bohème* 2025) and baritone Daniel Barrett (*L'heure espagnole / The Bear* 2025) – perform onstage alongside mezzo-soprano Alexandria Moon making her Company debut and tenor Connor James Smith (*The Merry Widow* 2025). The skills, artistry, and work ethic of these young musicians never fail to impress me, and I hope you are captivated by their performances.

Elsewhere at Scottish Opera, we remain committed to making opera as accessible as possible across ages, communities, and locations. Our Primary Schools Programme is now on the road, reaching over 100 schools across Scotland, giving Primary pupils the chance to perform their own specially created opera.

On our main stages, we present the hugely exciting world premiere of Dai Fujikura and Harry Ross' *The Great Wave*, an international co-production with KAJIMOTO exploring the life of Katsushika Hokusai and his daughter Ōi. Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* in concert and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* in Sir Thomas Allen's beautiful production conclude our 2025/26 Season. Our 2026/27 Season is announced on 7 May.

Scottish Opera remains immensely grateful to the Scottish Government for ongoing core funding. I would particularly like to thank Friends of Scottish Opera, JTH Charitable Trust, and The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust for their support of *Opera On Your Doorstep*. I hope you enjoy this spirited performance.

Alex Reedijk OBE FRC
General Director

The Office Party

Toby Stanford
Music Director / Pianist

Emma Doherty
Director

Kira Kaplan ** Soprano
Alexandria Moon Mezzo-soprano
Connor James Smith Tenor
Daniel Barrett * Baritone

Kenneth MacLeod
Designer

Barry McDonald
Lighting Designer

Musical programme devised by **Fiona MacSherry**

The performance lasts approximately two hours,
including a 20-minute interval

*Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2025/26
**Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2024–26

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Memo to all staff, from company exec, Re: Nedda's leaving party

Dear Team,

As many of you already know, Nedda will soon be leaving our office to return home and support her family, as her mother is unwell. While we're truly sorry to see her go, we want to take the opportunity to come together and thank her for everything she's brought to the company.

Please join us for a farewell party to celebrate Nedda's time with us and all the wonderful contributions in her role as Regional Manager at Pritchett & Sons.

Let's make it a memorable send off!

Warm regards,
Mr Pritchett
CEO, Pritchett & Sons

Welcome to the party!

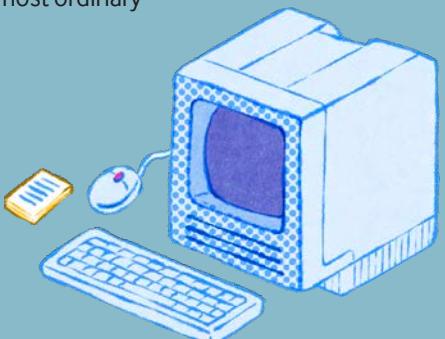
It's a privilege to be directing Scottish Opera's *Opera On Your Doorstep* for the 2025/26 Season and to be working with such a talented team of artists.

As I began shaping the repertoire, three recurring themes stood out: forbidden love, celebration and revelry, and a deep desire to escape the monotony of everyday life. The space where all three intersected – perhaps unexpectedly – was the office party. Our story follows four colleagues navigating complex, messy, and at times questionable relationships. Amidst the whir of the photocopier and the clatter of keyboards, their professionalism slowly unravels. We watch as they compete, flirt, betray, fall in love and have their hearts broken – culminating in a chaotic and explosive leaving do where tensions boil over and true colours are revealed.

Tonight's office party reminds us that, even in the most ordinary places, real human drama thrives and, behind the routine, there is always a story worth telling.

I hope you enjoy the show!

Emma Doherty
Director



Core funded by



Programme

Prologue *Pagliacci*

Selections from *Roméo et Juliette*

- Juliette's Waltz
- Stéphano's Aria
- Roméo's Aria
- Balcony Scene

Letter Scene *Werther*

Selections from Act I *Pagliacci*

- Nedda's Aria
- Duet: 'Nedda! 'Silvio, here so early!'
- Canio's Aria

INTERVAL

A Hand of Bridge

'He bewilders my affections' *Alcina*

Selections from *Die Fledermaus*

- Duet: 'It's the Talk of the Town'
- Aria: 'Chacun à son gout'
- Duet: 'What a tonic! What a beauty!'
- Aria: Csárdás 'Songs of my homeland'
- Champagne Song
- Ensemble: 'Brother-mine and sister-mine'

Ruggero Leoncavallo

Charles Gounod

Jules Massenet

Ruggero Leoncavallo

Samuel Barber

George Frideric Handel

Johann Strauss II



Programme Notes

This evening's performance has a narrative and character of its own. However, for those who wish to know more, these notes explain the original operatic context of the pieces you will hear.

Prologue from *Pagliacci* (1892)

Text: Ruggero Leoncavallo

English Translation: Bill Bankes-Jones

Music: Ruggero Leoncavallo

Tonio: Daniel Barrett

Leoncavallo based his tale of adultery and bloody vengeance within a travelling commedia dell'arte troupe on a real murder trial that he witnessed as a child. At the start of *Pagliacci*, Tonio – one of the clowns – addresses the audience directly: what they are about to see is pure drama, but each one of these players has a human heart that they should not ignore amidst the fantasy. The stage is set for the show to begin.

Selections from *Roméo et Juliette* (1867)

Juliette's Waltz

Stéphano's Aria

Roméo's Aria

Balcony Scene

Text: Jules Barbier and Michel Carré, after Shakespeare's 1597 play

English Translation: Edmund Tracey

Music: Charles Gounod

Juliette: Kira Kaplan

Stéphano / Gertrude: Alexandria Moon

Roméo: Connor James Smith

While taking full advantage of the romance and grandeur of 19th century French opera conventions, Gounod's adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* is very faithful to Shakespeare's tale of star-crossed lovers from quarrelling families. In Act I, Juliette is intoxicated by the heady atmosphere of the Capulets' ball even before she meets Roméo. She wants to capture that feeling and hold it close to her forever in her joyous waltz.

The next selection takes place in Act III, after Roméo and Juliette have met, fallen in love, and married. Stéphano, Roméo's page, taunts the Capulets into a brawl with a saucy song that hints at his master's forbidden romance.

The second two extracts go back to the play's and opera's most famous moment: the Act II Balcony Scene. Roméo, watching from below Juliette's window, ardently implores his love to appear like a pure and radiant star to banish night's darkness. Getting rid of her nurse Gertrude, Juliette comes out to her balcony to meet him, and the pair sing a rapturous duet pledging their devotion. Fearing someone should catch them, they promise to meet again tomorrow.

Letter Scene from *Werther* (1892)

Text: Édouard Blau, Paul Milliet, and Georges Hartmann, after Goethe's 1774 novel

English Translation: Norman Tucker

Music: Jules Massenet

Charlotte: Alexandria Moon

Sophie: Kira Kaplan

Many composers have adapted Goethe's epistolary novel for the operatic stage after it sparked possibly the world's first case of literary celebrity. Massenet's version, however, is the only one that has survived to the present day, possibly in part due to the astute psychological characterisation of Charlotte. Werther fell madly in love with her when he escorted her to a dance many months ago, not knowing she was engaged to Albert. When Werther's passion grew more worrying, Charlotte forbade him from visiting until Christmas. Now, on Christmas Eve, she reads over the many letters he sent her during their separation, confused by her own feelings and worried that they foretell some tragedy when he arrives – or if he does not. When her younger sister Sophie comes to see her, she cannot hide her distress.

Act I selections from *Pagliacci* (1892)

Nedda's Aria

Duet: 'Nedda!' 'Silvio, here so early!'

Canio's Aria

Text: Ruggero Leoncavallo

English Translation: Bill Bankes-Jones

Music: Ruggero Leoncavallo

Nedda: Kira Kaplan

Silvio: Daniel Barrett

Canio: Connor James Smith

The play *Tonio* introduced is well underway, and the travelling troupe of players have arrived in a new town to set up a performance that very night. Nedda is married to Canio, the troupe's leader, but she is restless. Their marriage has not been happy, and she has fallen in love with Silvio, a villager who promises a new kind of life. She imagines herself as free as the birds. During a clandestine meeting with Silvio, he begs her to run away with him, and she eventually agrees. Unfortunately, *Tonio* overhears the adulterous lovers and brings Canio to witness his wife's betrayal. Canio, furious and heartbroken, must still put on his makeup and play the cuckolded husband for the paying crowd.

INTERVAL

***A Hand of Bridge* (1959)**

Text: Gian Carlo Menotti

Music: Samuel Barber

Bill: Connor James Smith

Geraldine: Kira Kaplan

David: Daniel Barrett

Sally: Alexandria Moon

Clocking in around nine minutes, *A Hand of Bridge* is the shortest regularly performed opera. Written by the real-life couple Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti, its interwoven ariettas expose the innermost, deeply unfulfilled desires of four unhappily married characters – Bill to Sally, Geraldine to David – after Bill plays a five of hearts and starts a new hand.

Bill is worried his recent infidelities will be discovered, wondering about his mistress' whereabouts while he is stuck around the card table. Geraldine wonders why Bill seems so distant despite their past flirtation, lamenting that her husband, son, and dying mother are slipping away just as she is learning to love. David is furious at his stalled professional position, cursing his boss Mr Pritchett and his fate while fantasising about sexual adventures. Sally, despite her husband's suspicions, is mainly frustrated at having to play 'dummy' again; she fixates on and frets over buying a peacock feather hat.

'He bewilders my affections' from *Alcina* (1735)

Text: Attributed to Antonio Fanzaglia, originally written as *L'isola di Alcina*

English Translation: Amanda Holden

Music: George Frideric Handel

Ruggiero: Alexandria Moon

Handel's opera is one of three he based on the epic poem *Orlando furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto. The knight Ruggiero (a role written for a castrato, now usually taken by a mezzo-soprano) is beset by a series of fantastical adventures – now, he is marooned on Alcina's enchanted island, where she turns her lovers into animals and plants when she is bored of them. Ruggiero has remained in Alcina's favours and escaped this fate, but his betrothed Bradamante has disguised herself as a man and come to rescue him. After all these magical deceptions and human disguises, Ruggiero is bewildered when 'Ricciardo' reveals 'himself' to be Bradamante. As much as he wants to believe his beloved is once again with him, he must be careful and not let his guard down lest he too finds himself joining the local wildlife.

Biographies

Selections from *Die Fledermaus* (1874)

Duet: 'It's the Talk of the Town'
Aria: 'Chacun à son gout'
Duet: 'What a tonic! What a beauty!'
Aria: Csárdás 'Songs of my homeland'
Champagne Song
Ensemble: 'Brother-mine and sister-mine'

Text: Karl Haffner and Richard Genée, based on the farce *Das Gefängnis (The Prison)*, by

Julius Roderich Benedix

English Translations: Leonard Hancock and David Poutney

Music: Johann Strauss II

Doctor Falke: Daniel Barrett

Gabriel von Eisenstein: Connor James Smith

Count Orlofsky: Alexandria Moon

Rosalinde: Kira Kaplan

Die Fledermaus is the quintessential operetta: the entire plot revolves around one harebrained scheme to attend a party before Gabriel von Eisenstein must spend eight days in jail for insulting an official. Naturally, disguises, deception, and good-hearted japes abound.

Doctor Falke, Eisenstein's friend, convinces Eisenstein to report for his sentence a day late and join him for a night of revels at Count Orlofsky's. Falke, of course, has ulterior motives of petty revenge, hoping to pay Eisenstein back for abandoning him drunk in the city centre after a costume ball. To this end, Falke invites Eisenstein's wife Rosalinde to Orlofsky's to witness her husband's drunken exploits.

Orlofsky welcomes everyone to his lavish party, exhorting them to partake in food, drink, and merriment – the only boring people are the ones who do not partake of life's pleasures. Here, Eisenstein sees a beautiful, masked 'Hungarian' lady (Rosalinde in disguise). As he tries to woo her, she takes his watch as proof of his affection – and indiscretion. She sings a traditional Hungarian csárdás to keep up her ruse.

But all ends happily ever after – as long as champagne is involved, and lots of it, everything is forgiven.

Programme notes by **Carmen Paddock**, Publications Editor at Scottish Opera



Daniel Barrett – Baritone

Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2025/26

Praised for his 'athletic baritone with bags of personality' (*Opera Magazine* 2024), Daniel is a graduate of the Royal College of Music Opera Studio. He is an associate artist with the Josephine Baker Trust, a Samling Artist, and a 2025 Alvarez Emerging Artist. Daniel won the 2025 Brooks van der Pump English Song Competition and claimed second prize in the 2025 AECC Patricia Routledge Competition. In 2022 Daniel won first prize at the RCM's Lieder Competition, claiming the Ted Moss and Bertha Taylor-Sach Prize; he claimed third prize in the RCM's Brooks van der Pump English Song Competition 2022 and in the Lies Askonas Competition Finals 2023.

Scottish Opera appearances: *Tchaikovsky's Heroines & Heroes*, cover and Access Marcello *La bohème*, Ramiro *L'heure espagnole*, Grigory Stepanovich Smirnov *The Bear*.

Operatic engagements include: Sam *Un ballo in maschera* (Verbier Festival); Figaro *The Barber of Seville* (Opera Holland Park); Il conte *Le nozze di Figaro*, Danilo *The Merry Widow*, The Clock *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, The Cat *La bella dormente nel bosco*, Jupiter *Orpheus in the Underworld* (RCM).



Emma Doherty – Director

Emma is a dynamic stage director and musician whose work spans professional, educational, and community settings – from national opera houses to prisons, homelessness hostels, and schools. Passionate about the transformative power of creativity, Emma champions its role in empowerment, wellbeing, and fostering community cohesion. Emma holds a first class degree in Music from the University of Manchester where she regularly performed as a soprano. She co-founded The Opera Shack, a collective bringing interdisciplinary opera into unusual settings for which she was Artistic Director. She is a Create and Sing Artist with the Royal Ballet and Opera and specialises in youth engagement, having frequently directed the Royal Opera and Opera North Youth Company. In November she directed a semi-staged production of *Balls* at the Royal Festival Hall with the London Philharmonia Orchestra under Marin Alsop ('A triumph', *Opera Now*). Next, Emma will assist Natalie Abrahams on *The Turn of the Screw* at The Linbury Theatre, Royal Ballet and Opera.

For Scottish Opera: Director *The Giant's Harp*; Assistant Director *Oedipus Rex* and *Marx in London!*



Kira Kaplan – Soprano

Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2024–26

Kira was a National Opera Studio Global Talent Young Artist. She recently won the Career Bridges Grant Competition. She is a three-time Regional Finalist and District Winner of the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Council Auditions and First Place Winner of the 2022 Camille Coloratura Competition's Artist Division. Previous roles include Madame Herz *Impresario*, Le Feu *L'enfant et les sortilèges*, and Anne Truelove *The Rake's Progress*. Young Artist engagements include work with Finger Lakes Opera (Tomita Young Artist), Brevard Music Center (Janiec Young Artist), Hawaii Performing Arts Festival, Ohio Light Opera, and Villa Nigra Opera Festival.

Scottish Opera appearances: cover and Access Musetta *La bohème*, Plaintiff *Trial by Jury*, Sylvia Lawless *A Matter of Misconduct!* (world premiere), *Opera Highlights* 2025, *The Puccini Collection* 2024, Miss Wordsworth *Albert Herring*, cover and Access Norina *Don Pasquale*.

Operatic engagements include: Donna Anna *Don Giovanni* (Waterperry); title role *Alcina*, Emily Webb *Our Town*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Diana *If I Were You* (Boston Opera Institute).

Future engagements include: Susannah *The Marriage of Figaro* (Scottish Opera).



Kenneth MacLeod – Designer

For Scottish Opera: *L'heure espagnole / The Bear, Opera Highlights Spring 2025.*
Theatre design credits include: *Dracula: Mina's Reckoning* (NTS, UK Theatre Awards 2024 Best Design winner), *Maggie & Me* (NTS, WhatsOnStage Awards Best Design 2024 nominee); *Spring Awakening, Chess, Cabaret, West Side Story* (RCS); *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (Faena Miami / Unigram); *Cinderella, Oor Wullie, The Yellow On The Broom, The Maids, Cinderella* (Dundee Rep); *Spin!, The Metamorphosis* (Vanishing Point, CATS 2020 nominee); *The Dark Carnival/Vanishing Point / Citizens Theatre, CATS 2019 nominee; The Stamping Ground* (Raw Material / Eden Court); *Money Makes The World Go Round, Echoes In The Night, The Outsider* (Carnival / Cunard); *Don't. Make. Tea.* (Birds of Paradise); *Bright Young Things, Time & Motion* (National Youth Ballet); *Kes* (Perth Theatre); *In The Weeds* (Mull Theatre / Made In Scotland); *Falstaff, Tosca* (Opera Bohemia).
Associate Design work includes: Disney's *Bedknobs & Broomsticks* (Michael Harrison / UK Tour); *Flight* (Vox Motus / EIF). Kenneth is a graduate of the RCS and The California Institute of the Arts. kenneth-macleod.com



Connor James Smith – Tenor

Connor is a tenor from West Lothian and a recent GSMD graduate where he was awarded a Distinction. He is also graduate of the RCS Vocal Studies Department. Recently awarded the John D Scott Award for developing singers by Scottish Opera, he works extensively around the country with companies including the Scottish Fiddle Orchestra, Into Opera (*Carmen*), Fox Opera (*Le docteur Miracle*), and Opera Bohemia (*The Pearl Fishers, The Merry Widow*). He was an Alvarez Young Artist with Garsington Opera (*Così fan tutte, Rusalka*). As well as a busy singing schedule, Connor is also in demand as a choral conductor, having been the Musical Director of Cathures Choir in Glasgow, Assistant Conductor for Ayr Choral Union, and a guest conductor of choirs throughout the UK.
Scottish Opera appearances: cover *Gonzalve L'heure espagnole*, Sam Birochi *The Merry Widow*, cover Janek *The Makropulos Affair*, cover Albert *Albert Herring*, Danny *RED*, cover *Spy Marx in London!*, cover Gastone *La traviata*; cover and Access Remendado *Carmen*, chorus *Nixon in China*, chorus *Rigoletto*, chorus *Edgar*, chorus *Silvano*, chorus *The Magic Flute*, chorus *Tosca*, chorus *Iris*.



Barry McDonald – Lighting Designer

Barry McDonald has worked as a Lighting Supervisor and Chargehand at Scottish Opera for 14 years, delivering high-quality support for lighting designers for a wide range of productions. He has also undertaken Associate Lighting Design work, overseeing teams and ensuring smooth delivery from rehearsal to performance. Known for his calm approach, technical skill, and attention to detail, Barry enjoys collaborating to create the right atmosphere for every moment on stage. *Opera Highlights 2025/26* marks his debut as Lighting Designer at Scottish Opera.



Alexandria Moon – Mezzo-soprano

Scottish Opera debut

British mezzo-soprano Alexandria Moon is a member of the opera studio at the Royal College of Music and the Lotti Masterson Scholar supported by the John Nickson and Simon Rew Scholarship in memory of Sir Peter Jones. Her studies have been generously supported by the Opera Awards Bursary and Drake Calleja, Countess of Munster, and Josephine Baker Trusts. Alexandria is a 2026 Opera Prelude Young Artist and was a 2025 Garsington Alvarez Emerging Artist where she received the Simon Sandbach Award after debuting as Masha *The Queen of Spades* and in the chorus of *Rodelinda*, where she also covered the role of Eduige and performed Eduige in the OperaFirst production. Upcoming engagements include debuting Flora *La traviata* and covering Octavian *Der Rosenkavalier* (Garsington) and covering Mercédès *Carmen* (ENO).

Operatic engagements include: *Lucretia The Rape of Lucretia* (British Youth Opera), *Concepción L'heure espagnole* (RCM), *Marcellina Le nozze di Figaro* (RCM, available on OperaVision).



Toby Stanford – Music Director / Pianist

Scottish Opera Emerging Artist 2025/26

Toby is a collaborative pianist, coach, and composer whose work spans opera, art song, and contemporary music. Reading Music at the University of Oxford, he held the Repetiteur Scholarship with New Chamber Opera, served as Music Director of Oxford Contemporary Opera, and was awarded first prize in the OUMS Composition Competition. He continued studies at the GSMD, where he received the Tracey Chadwell Memorial Prize and the Jubilee Piano Accompaniment Prize. He was a member of Graham Johnson's Song Guild and attended the Franz-Schubert-Institut in Baden-bei-Wien. In 2024/25, Toby held a place on the Piano-Vocal Arts Residency offered by McGill University and the Université de Montréal. As a composer, Toby's music has been performed by ensembles including RedNote, CHROMA, and the Oxford University Sinfonietta. His song cycle *When I Was A Boy I Lived Like Water*, written with poet Cyrus Larcombe-Moore, premiered to acclaim in Montréal and Belfast with further performances scheduled across the UK. Toby's future projects explore the intersections of performance, composition, and collaborative artistry.

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For more than a decade the Friends of Scottish Opera have supported our annual tours, bringing the highest-quality opera to thousands of people across the country and giving them the opportunity to enjoy the art form in local theatres, village halls, and community centres. Without *Opera On Your Doorstep*, many would have to travel miles for a live performance or miss out completely.

The Friends of Scottish Opera play a crucial role in taking our small-scale tours out on the road each year. **Thank you to our Friends for making this evening's performance possible.**

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To join over the phone or find out more, contact Sarah McBryant on Sarah.McBryant@scottishopera.org.uk or **0141 242 0596**.

‘This was a splendid evening. The singers and pianist gave 1000%, at times had us rolling on the floor as we laughed, at times had us near in tears. This was a treat. Please, please come again’

Audience member in Tarbert, Isle of Harris

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