

Annual Report 2024/25



Scottish  
Opera

Character  
Commitment  
Community

# Welcome

Scottish Opera's mission is to entertain, inspire, surprise, educate, challenge, and delight audiences by delivering high quality, powerful, innovative opera throughout Scotland and internationally. Scottish Opera has pushed boundaries since 1962 through a commitment to world-class opera, high-quality craftsmanship, collaborations, new work, and – most importantly – Scotland's audiences. The 2024/25 Season included beloved revivals, new productions, co-productions, world premieres, an extensive touring programme that ensures the Company reaches all 32 local authorities at least every two seasons.

The Company's productions have won worldwide critical acclaim. Performances range from the earliest operas to world premieres. All mainstage performances, regardless of language, are subtitled. Access (Dementia Friendly) and audio-described performances further widen accessibility to opera. Scottish Opera provides free tickets to asylum seekers, refugees, and school groups and discounted tickets to those under the age of 26. Small-scale tours travel to every corner of the country. Education and Outreach programmes (run by the longest-standing department of its kind in Europe) make opera accessible to all ages, social backgrounds, and abilities, developing personal creativity, interest

in opera, and wellbeing. Throughout its existence, Scottish Opera has demonstrated flexibility, resilience, and innovation in approaching financial and artistic challenges – not only on stage but also navigating new technologies and modes of audience engagement. Research carried out by ScotInform (Scotland's longest established independent market research company) shows that, across Scottish Opera's offerings, the Company overindexes in all 14 demographic groups, as defined by Experian's Mosaic classification, across Scotland.

Scottish Opera is one of five National Performing Companies funded by the Scottish Government. It aims to deliver high-quality, innovative, and creative input in support of and at the heart of Scotland's cultural vision. It also gathers significant support from individuals, trusts, and the private sector alongside income from ticket sales, production hire, and manufacturing. Scottish Opera takes its role as a National Performing Company and as the only full-time, professional opera company in Scotland very seriously. It contributes significantly to Scotland's cultural industry, retaining artisans and performance-related professionals in Scotland through employment and training, including an Emerging Artists programme.

# Chair's Statement

The 2024/25 financial year has been one of artistic excellence and meaningful connection, continuing Scottish Opera's tradition of delivering exceptional experiences. Audience surveys for the year indicate 94% of attendees plan to attend a future Scottish Opera production, reflecting the deep trust and enthusiasm our audiences place in the Company.

Steered by The Board of Scottish Opera, the Company's revised business model enabled more opera to be presented with the same assets by presenting two productions in a single theatre space. A revival of Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* was presented alongside a new production of Britten's *Albert Herring*.

Co-productions remain a cornerstone of our sustainable business approach and Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*, a co-production with Welsh National Opera, was a fine example of this when it reached our stages. Elsewhere, our 2022 production of Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* was also performed at The Metropolitan Opera, New York, the final co-producer to present it. The international reach of our productions through rental partnerships continues to expand as a vital revenue stream for Scottish Opera. Our design philosophy ensures productions remain versatile and adaptable for theatres of varying configurations worldwide. Hired operas

included Verdi's *La traviata* and Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*. Our first opera for animation, *Josefine* by Samuel Bordoli and Antonia Bain, was exhibited – sometimes winning awards – at film festivals in Vienna, Venice, Messina, Mannheim, New York, and Sicily and had its Scottish premiere at the Glasgow Short Film Festival in March 2025.

Our skilled artisan workshops continue their exceptional work, designing, building, and crafting sets, props, and costumes both for Scottish Opera and an expanding portfolio of external clients. Our workshops built props for Nevada Ballet Theater's *Peter Pan* – including a giant crocodile!

As a charitable organisation, Scottish Opera draws upon diverse funding sources to advance its artistic mission. We are especially grateful for our dedicated family of supporters, many of whom have loyally championed our cause over many years. Corporate partnerships remain crucial to this financial ecosystem, especially as we navigate ongoing economic pressures. Scottish Opera maintains rigorous standards in evaluating potential supporters, recognising the complexities of international commerce, geopolitical tensions, and the global shift toward sustainable energy. Our due diligence processes align with guidance from the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and the Code of Fundraising Practice.

Every member of the Scottish Opera community contributes meaningfully to helping audiences understand and engage with our shared world. We honour diverse viewpoints and create spaces where individuals can express themselves authentically within supportive environments that encourage empathy and stimulate reflection. As one of Scotland's National Performing Companies, Scottish Opera serves as a vital pillar of a healthy society. We continue to advocate for cultural investment to reach 1% of total Scottish Government expenditure, matching the Culture Commission's recommendations. This would align Scotland more closely with European standards, where cultural investment averages 1.5%.

We remain grateful to the Scottish Government for its continued core funding and welcomed the 4.1% increase for 2025/26, which has enabled Scottish Opera to cover increasing costs of National Insurance and to present our programmed Season for 2025/26. I would also like to express our appreciation for the support of the many MPs and MSPs who have enjoyed attending productions and witnessing our education and outreach work in person. The UK Government Theatre Tax Relief continues to help Scottish Opera face economic pressures. This relief helps us remain ambitious, create positive social

impact for local communities, develop new productions, generate employment, and develop future talent.

My deepest gratitude extends to all our supporters – loyal audiences, charitable trusts, foundations, business partners, and individual benefactors – whose unwavering commitment sustains Scottish Opera's work. This dedication is treasured by every member of our staff and Board.

The Board meets quarterly, supported by more frequent meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Advancement Committee. We are delighted to welcome Peta Hay, David Seers, and Loretta Tomasi to the Board and are grateful for many years of service from Liz Cameron as she steps aside. I continue to feel immense gratitude toward my fellow Directors and the Senior Management Team, whose ongoing demonstration of vision, tenacity, adaptability, and passion drives our success. I am consistently inspired by the Scottish Opera team's remarkable capacity to transform every challenge into creative opportunity, delivering exceptional artistic work that captivates audiences across Scotland and the globe.

**Peter Lawson CBE**  
Chair of Scottish Opera



## 2024/25 Summary

The 2024/25 Season unveiled a revised business approach to artistic programming that allowed the Company to present more titles alongside making efficiency savings and better use of assets.

Touring opera remains vital to Scotland's dispersed communities with many sold out performances of *Opera Highlights* and Pop-up Opera.

This was Music Director Stuart Stratford's ninth year with Scottish Opera. He remains committed to programming an artistically rich and diverse array of performances and to involving people directly in opera making, including through large-scale community projects.

In addition to performances in Scotland, Scottish Opera productions were presented across the globe by opera companies who co-produced or hired the productions built here in Scotland. These included Janáček's *Jenůfa* at the Royal Swedish Opera, Verdi's *La traviata* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* in Toronto with Canadian Opera Company, Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* at Detroit Opera, Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* at New York's Metropolitan Opera, and Welsh National Opera's tour of Puccini's *Il trittico*. In Salzburg, Scottish Opera commission *Anthropocene* by Stuart MacRae and Louise Welsh received its Austrian premiere. These international presentations are testament to the Company's world-class reputation.



*Don Pasquale*, 2024

# 92,617

people saw a live performance or participated in outreach

# 4,495

people saw Pop-up Opera

# 4,051

people saw *Opera Highlights* in 24 venues

# 1,128

people participated in Breath Cycle II, helping those living with Long COVID (plus a further 692 using on-demand resources)

# 100

people in the community chorus for promenade performances of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, performed to 2,523 people at the 2024 Edinburgh International festival

# 18

screenings of Samuel Bordoli's and Antonia Bain's *Josefine*, our first opera animation, to over 2,650 viewers

# 3

new productions – Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex*, Britten's *Albert Herring*, and Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair* (the latter previously presented by Welsh National Opera)

# 1

world premiere of Karen MacIver and Jane Davidson's *RED*

# 69,750

views of our 2021/22 production of *The Gondoliers* on OperaVision

## Performances

Between April 2024 and March 2025, Scottish Opera presented 11 opera offerings including two world premieres and three new productions.

### La traviata

The financial year started with a 'dazzling', 'stunning', and 'magnificent' revival of David McVicar's 2008 production of Verdi's *La traviata*. Over 18,400 people attended performances of this beloved opera in Glasgow, Inverness, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh. Packed houses, many sold to capacity, demonstrated confidence and trust in Scottish Opera. The production was a very successful conclusion to the Company's 61st Season.

The highly detailed props and costumes created by Scottish Opera's workshop teams are on display on the following spread.

'as fresh and engaging as ever... Lee is outstanding'

[The Spectator](#)

'an energy that overflowed the stage and made it feel like we were all guests at Violetta's soirée'

[The Spectator](#)

'Dynamic, intelligent and emotionally scintillating'

[The National](#)

'like fine wine. This McVicar improves with age.'

[Bachtrack](#)



The Reviews Hub



North West End



Arts Review



West End Best Friend



The Herald



Bachtrack



Broadway Baby



Corr Blimey



The QR



The Scotsman



The Stage

*La traviata*, 2024







## RED

In July, Scottish Opera Young Company (for ages 17 to 23) presented the world premiere of *RED* by Jane Davidson MBE and Karen MacIver. Flora Emily Thomson directed and Chris Gray conducted a cast of 14 young performers through four scenes representing different stages of life, each based around well-known Grimm fairy tales.

*RED* was the final performance of Scottish Opera Young Company. Scottish Opera is now developing a wider strategy aimed at helping young people navigate the many possibilities of the performing arts workplace.



‘The production... was one of the Young Company’s best, radiating ingenuity, accomplishment and creative spirit’

Opera Magazine

‘The young performers are dazzlingly skilled singers, and their dedication to their art was clear to see’

North West End

## Josefine

*Josefine* – the UK’s first opera for animation – made its world premiere at Vienna’s Filmfestival Rathausplatz in July 2024. Directed by Antonia Bain with music by Samuel Bordoli and a libretto by the pair, it loosely adapts Kafka’s short story ‘Josefine the Singer’ into a 14-minute film exploring the complicated relationship between singer and audience and the ever-more-relevant question of art’s place in times of crisis. The soundtrack features 2022/23 Emerging Artist Zoe Drummond, a chorus, and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera conducted by Susannah Wapshott. Produced in partnership with Maestro Broadcasting, *Josefine* won awards at film festivals in Cannes and Messina during the financial year and played in New York, Mannheim, Northampton, Glasgow, and Edinburgh.





## Oedipus Rex

This year's community project was a hugely ambitious immersive staging of Igor Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* in the National Museum of Scotland's awe-inspiring Grand Gallery during the Edinburgh International Festival.

Music Director Stuart Stratford steered soloists; The Orchestra of Scottish Opera; and an amateur community chorus of 100, over half of whom were members of staff at NHS Lothian (thanks to an ongoing partnership with Tonic Arts NHS Lothian), in a series of unforgettable promenade performances. On completion of the project, 96% of NHS Lothian staff in the choir reported an improvement in their mental wellbeing and 98% reported an improvement in their physical wellbeing.

'During the rehearsals, I noticed I became more relaxed and developed greater resilience to work stresses. I had more energy from having a fun activity in the middle of the week. I've had more innovative ideas at work in the last couple of months. It's been good to be able to draw on this experience professionally.'

**NHS Lothian staff member with a stressful, patient-facing role**

'a bracing, uplifting experience'

**The Spectator**

'a clever, powerful and engaging telling of the Oedipus myth, that gives an emotional account of Stravinsky's score'

**The Stage**

'bold and successful operatic experiment'

**The Telegraph**

'The best thing about this concept is the monumental vastness of the sound in this space'

**The Times**

'if you want to be part of a ritual that is this year's Festival theme, this is the show for you'

**Edinburgh Evening News**

★★★★★

**The Stage**

★★★★★

**Theatre Scotland**

★★★★★

**North West End**

★★★★★

**A Spy in the Stalls**

★★★★★

**The Guardian**

★★★★★

**Bachtrack**

★★★★★

**Broadway Baby**

★★★★★

**ScotsGay Arts**

★★★★★

**The Arts Desk**

★★★★★

**The List**

★★★★★

**The Times**

★★★★★

**The Telegraph**



*Oedipus Rex*, 2024



## Albert Herring

Scottish Opera's innovative touring production of Benjamin Britten and Eric Crozier's *Albert Herring*, performed from September–November 2024, was directed by award-winning Daisy Evans with set and costume designs by Kat Heath. This production toured three venues: Haddington's Corn Exchange (opening the 15th Lammermuir Festival), Theatre Royal Glasgow, and Festival Theatre Edinburgh.

'an excellent production... distinguished by outstanding singing and virtuosic orchestral playing'

[Seen and Heard International](#)

'Who knew opera could be so much fun'

[The Opera Critic](#)

'The set pieces were especially thrilling, the high drama, the speeches and the missing Albert all given full operatic treatment'

[Bachtrack](#)

'a charming farce'

[The Scotsman](#)

'a whole company success'

[The Telegraph](#)



[The Telegraph](#)



[Arts Review Edinburgh](#)



[The Arts Desk](#)



[ScotsGay Arts](#)



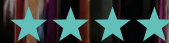
[Bachtrack](#)



[Music OMH](#)



[North West End](#)



[The Guardian](#)



[The Stage](#)



[The Scotsman](#)



[The Times](#)



*Albert Herring*, 2024



## Don Pasquale

The autumn mainscale production was a revival of the 2014 production of Donizetti's beloved comedy *Don Pasquale* by director-designer duo André Barbe and Renaud Doucet. Stuart Stratford conducted a cast including David Stout as Don Pasquale, with company debuts for Stacey Alleaume and Simone Osborne as Norina, Filipe Manu as Ernesto, and Josef Jeongmeen Ahn as the wily Doctor Malatesta. It was performed in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverness, and Aberdeen and supported by The Scottish Opera Syndicate.

'A triumph of synergy'

VoxCarnyx

'Barbe and Doucet's witty production is a light-hearted delight'

Bachtrack

'a joy to watch and listen to'

Seen and Heard International

'As ever, Stuart Stratford conducted his magnificent orchestra with flair'

North West End

★★★★★

The Reviews Hub

★★★★★

Arts Review Edinburgh

★★★★★

North West End

★★★★★

Corr Blimey

★★★★★

A Youngish Perspective

★★★★★

Across the Arts

★★★★★

Bachtrack

★★★★★

Broadway Baby

★★★★★

ScotsGay Arts

★★★★★

The Scotsman



## Touring Opera

Pop-up Opera is a vital component of Scottish Opera's touring productions, ensuring audiences have easy access to the art form right across the country. In summer 2024, 2,760 people attended *A Little Bit of Don Giovanni* and *A Little Bit of The Merry Widow*.

There were Pop-up performances in 23 schools of a new commission, *Sophie & Bear*, which gives young minds coping strategies for everyday worries and reminds them they are not alone in facing them. The show had music by Graham McCusker and writing and direction by Jessica Leary and Andrew McTaggart. Over 1750 pupils benefitted from the production with free performances across Scotland, from Dumfries and Galloway to the Orkney Islands.

In August, two performances of the light-hearted opera short *In Flagante*, a world premiere on the 2023/24 *Opera Highlights* tour by composer Toby Hession and librettist Emma Jenkins, toured to the Festival of Politics in the Scottish Parliament. Following three hapless government ministers and a cynical spin doctor, this was a great chance for members of the Scottish Parliament to enjoy this operatic satire.

A 24-date *Opera Highlights* tour travelled across Scotland from January–March 2025, from small communities in the likes of Mid Yell, Tain, and Durness to larger venues in Thurso, Campbeltown, Peebles, and Stranraer.

Additionally, the tour included 14 free 'How to Stage an Opera' workshops – 10 in schools for pupils and four in community centres for the general public – to directly and creatively involve people in opera-making.

This tour featured Scottish Opera 2024/25 Emerging Artists soprano Kira Kaplan, mezzo-soprano Chloe Harris, and baritone Ross Cumming, joined by tenor Robert Forrest and pianist Joseph Beesley. It was supported by The Friends of Scottish Opera and JTH Charitable Trust.

Other 2024/25 Emerging Artists included bass-baritone Edward Jowle, répétiteur Meghan Rhoades (with José Javier Ucendo also returning for a second year), and Elizabeth Salvesen Costume Trainee Beatrix Booth.

The following spread gives a vibrant pictorial overview of these touring operas.



‘energetic synergy  
and neat choreography’

[The Scotsman on Opera Highlights](#)



[The Herald on Opera Highlights](#)

‘By the time the performance ended, the audience had not only been on an operatic journey through Scotland, which lifted our souls, but we also left feeling we had been to a party.’

[Shetland News on Opera Highlights](#)





LANGHOLM





## The Makropulos Affair

A new co-production with Welsh National Opera of Janáček's *The Makropulos Affair*, directed by Olivia Fuchs and conducted by Martyn Brabbins, was presented in Glasgow and Edinburgh and was rapturously received by audiences and critics. *The Makropulos Affair* featured the return of a trio of performers from the acclaimed Scottish Opera production of *Marx in London!* one year previously: soprano Orla Boylan as the hipflask-toting opera diva Emilia Marty, Roland Wood as Baron Prus, and Alasdair Elliot as Count Hauk-Šendorf.

‘Boylan is magnificent, larger than life, mercilessly manipulative in a marathon vocal performance that moves inexorably to its fatalistic conclusion’

**The Scotsman**

‘aesthetically luxuriant’

**Bachtrack**

‘Fuchs’ production very successfully teases apart the work’s many ideas and plants them in a deeply human, very compassionate context.’

**The Stage**



**The Guardian**



**The Observer**



**The Scotsman**



**The Stage**



**The Times**



**Bachtrack**



**The List**



**North West End**



**Broadway Baby**



**Arts Review Edinburgh**



**A Youngish Perspective**



**ScotsGay Arts**



## Audience Development

Scottish Opera works regularly with organisations such as Fanzclub, The Welcoming, Refuweegee, and Highland Third Sector Interface to provide free tickets for New Scots. Since 2022, over 1600 free tickets have been used.

‘Thank you so very much once again for this wonderful opportunity for our new friends. They really appreciate opera and your kindness will hopefully ease some of the anxiety they are presently feeling over worsening conditions in Ukraine. Most of the families you are being so generous to have relatives and friends still in Ukraine so the last wee while has been an added stress for them as the invasion is ramped up. Showing them a return to another reality, even for just an evening, will be so beneficial. So, once again, my sincere thanks on their behalf.’

KSD Highlands for Ukraine



Access *La traviata*, 2024

## Access Opera

Access Opera performances continued to prove very popular, both with audience members who appreciate the more relaxed atmosphere and with school groups able to attend free of charge. Audio description was provided at Access Opera for the first time at *La traviata* in May and June 2024 and continued at *Don Pasquale* in October and November 2024.

A concerted effort to build relationships with key sight loss charities to advertise the service resulted in user numbers tripling in Glasgow and doubling in Edinburgh for Access *Don Pasquale*. In response to audience feedback, the start of the 2024/25 Season also saw a shift to providing audio description at full length matinee performances where possible, rather than evening shows.

‘My daughter has severe learning disabilities and can be quite vocal if enjoying the performance. She was becoming a bit restless, but when the music began, she sat back and enjoyed. She was a bit chatty and blowing kisses – always a good sign – but enjoying the music. These accessible performances are the only way my daughter can experience live music and the whole experience means so much more to her than a recording on TV. Thank you so much.’

Audience member at Access  
*Don Pasquale*



## Outreach & Education

The Company's Outreach & Education programme is recognised internationally as a leader in its field. Along with many activities integrated with performances, this full programme was once again able to affect change for the good in lives of people of all ages living across all regions of the country. Demographics particularly served were older adults and children and young people. The programme reached 39,850 people across Scotland.

The long-running Primary Schools Tour helps teachers of Primary 5-7 pupils all over Scotland deliver aspects of A Curriculum for Excellence as well as develops skills in music and the arts. Each of the 104 schools' involvement with the Tour culminates in workshops and a performance. Two imaginative, vibrant shows were on the road during the year: *Vikings: The Quest for the Dragon's Treasure* and *The Tale O'Tam O'Shanter* (the latter based on the poem by Robert Burns, commissioned to re-introduce young people to the works of the celebrated Scottish poet). The in-person programme once again sold out quickly, with schools continuing to look for ways to teach performing arts despite the decreasing number of specialist music and drama teachers to provide activity within schools.

Disney Musicals in Schools also continued to engage 'hard to reach' schools largely in areas with high levels of deprivation – a fantastic illustration of continuous professional development in action and a first experience of performing for many pupils. Hollybrook Academy (a school supporting pupils with additional support needs) joined the programme with adaptations made to the project delivery to allow the pupils, some with complex learning difficulties, to participate fully in rehearsals and performances.

The Small Magician is a new trauma-aware, inclusive, accessible vocal education resource enabling participants to challenge and build their vocal technique and knowledge healthily from the comfort of their own home or chosen space. Created by Scottish Opera 2021–23 Emerging Artist, 2023/24 Associate Artist, and 2024/25 Education Artist-in-Residence Lea Shaw, the project offers guided practice sessions to help participants understand their voices, reduce the impacts of stress, and foster a growing sense of calm and wellbeing in daily life. The guidance draws on classic pedagogy, scientific research, and yoga and embodiment practices to help participants embrace their speaking and singing voice.



*The Giant's Harp, 2024*

*The Giant's Harp*, an interactive educational singing workshop and performance pairing for pupils in P3 and P4, toured across Glasgow schools in November 2024. This free experience was created by Lea Shaw and harpist Sharron Griffiths and directed by Emma Doherty to introduce children to the beautiful music and versatility of the harp. Using the 18th-century fairy tale of Jack and the Beanstalk, which features a magical singing harp, youngsters learned about the long history of this instrument and the many continents and cultures where it can be found through singing, movement, narration, puppetry, and of course music familiar and new.

'We were blown away by the talent of the performers and everybody involved behind the scenes. The team did a fantastic job in ensuring the experience was age appropriate and involved the pupils. Thank you!'

**Teacher at Craigton Primary  
on *The Giant's Harp***



*The Tale O'Tam O'Shanter, 2025*

Scottish Opera's Community Choir had an exceptionally busy year, starting with preparations and performances at the Edinburgh International Festival of *Oedipus Rex*. This saw the choir double in size, with 50% of the chorus meeting and rehearsing in Edinburgh to complement the Glasgow-based choir. Following this, Scottish Opera launched a new Community Chorus in Edinburgh for NHS Lothian staff in partnership with Tonic Arts and NHS Lothian. The chorus sings a mix of opera, classical, and popular music and is open to all NHS Lothian staff regardless of experience. The Scottish Opera & NHS Lothian Chorus focuses not only on music-making but also acting, choreography,

and other performance elements needed onstage in an integrated, music-led drama. The aim is to develop participants' confidence and improve mental health and wellbeing.

The 2024/25 financial year saw the development of a new strategy aimed at helping more young people navigate the many possibilities of the performing arts workplace. A new programme underpinned by the Scottish Government's Developing the Young Workforce programme is underway, supporting many more young people by training them in skills that span the performing arts world.



*Memory Spinners, 2025*

Memory Spinners groups were fully booked for 2024/25. They used music, storytelling, movement, and visual arts to help people with dementia and their carers relax, get creative and form new support networks. Memory Spinners is supported by The AMW Charitable Trust, The Cruden Foundation, The J & J R Wilson Trust, The Kells Trust, The Souter Charitable Trust, and Scottish Opera's Education Angels.

Breath Cycle supports those with a range of conditions affecting lung health. It was originally designed in 2013 to help those living with cystic fibrosis, then repurposed for those living with Long COVID. Demand for the workshops continues. A pilot study,

carried out in partnership with CHSS to explore the benefits of Breath Cycle for people living with aphasia, came to a successful conclusion in June. Discussions on how to expand the project are on-going. Breath Cycle also featured at the 2024 Healing through Arts Festival with 350 engagements with the project. *Breath Cycle On Stage*, showcasing works created during the programme's songwriting workshops, was performed in Glasgow and Greenock in January and February 2025. Breath Cycle is supported by The Scottish Government, Cruach Trust, The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust, W M Mann Foundation, Souter Charitable Trust, and Scottish Opera's Education Angels.



# The Orchestra of Scottish Opera

As well as performing for all Scottish Opera's mainstage productions, The Orchestra of Scottish Opera took centre stage for *The Puccini Collection*, celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the composer's death and featuring Sinéad Campbell Wallace and Roland Wood. The Orchestra was also central to *The Strauss Collection*, extracts from Richard Strauss' Romantic operas. Re-opening the Haddington Corn Exchange in September 2024 with *Albert Herring*, William Cole's musical direction seamlessly integrated The Orchestra of Scottish Opera into the staging, with musicians cleverly incorporated as the Loxford Village Band.

The Orchestra of Scottish Opera regularly performs with other professional musical ensembles across Scotland, supporting their work and the country's wider ecology of live music and performing arts. Continuing its partnership with Paisley Opera, The Orchestra was conducted by Alastair Digges for their October 2024 production of Gounod's *Faust*. This financial year The Orchestra also worked with 'Pops at the Phil', Dundee Choral Union, and the City of Glasgow Chorus.

The 36th Ayr Arts Guild concert given by The Orchestra of Scottish Opera was conducted by Gabriella Teychenné and included music by Wagner and Bruckner.

*'The Puccini Collection* wasn't just a concert; it was an experience, a celebration of everything that makes Puccini's music timeless... It was impossible to leave untouched by the beauty of the evening'

North West End on  
*The Puccini Collection*

*'the orchestra may be the MVP of the concert'*

The QR on *The Puccini Collection*

*'It was as much of a delight... to be able to see as well as hear the players producing the details of the fabulous orchestral score, down to the tiniest details of hand percussion and including crisp, precise playing from the brass and winds.'*

Vox Carnyx on *The Strauss Collection*

*'The orchestra... sounds utterly glorious'*

The Reviews Hub on  
*The Strauss Collection*



North West End on  
*The Strauss Collection*



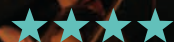
North West End on  
*The Puccini Collection*



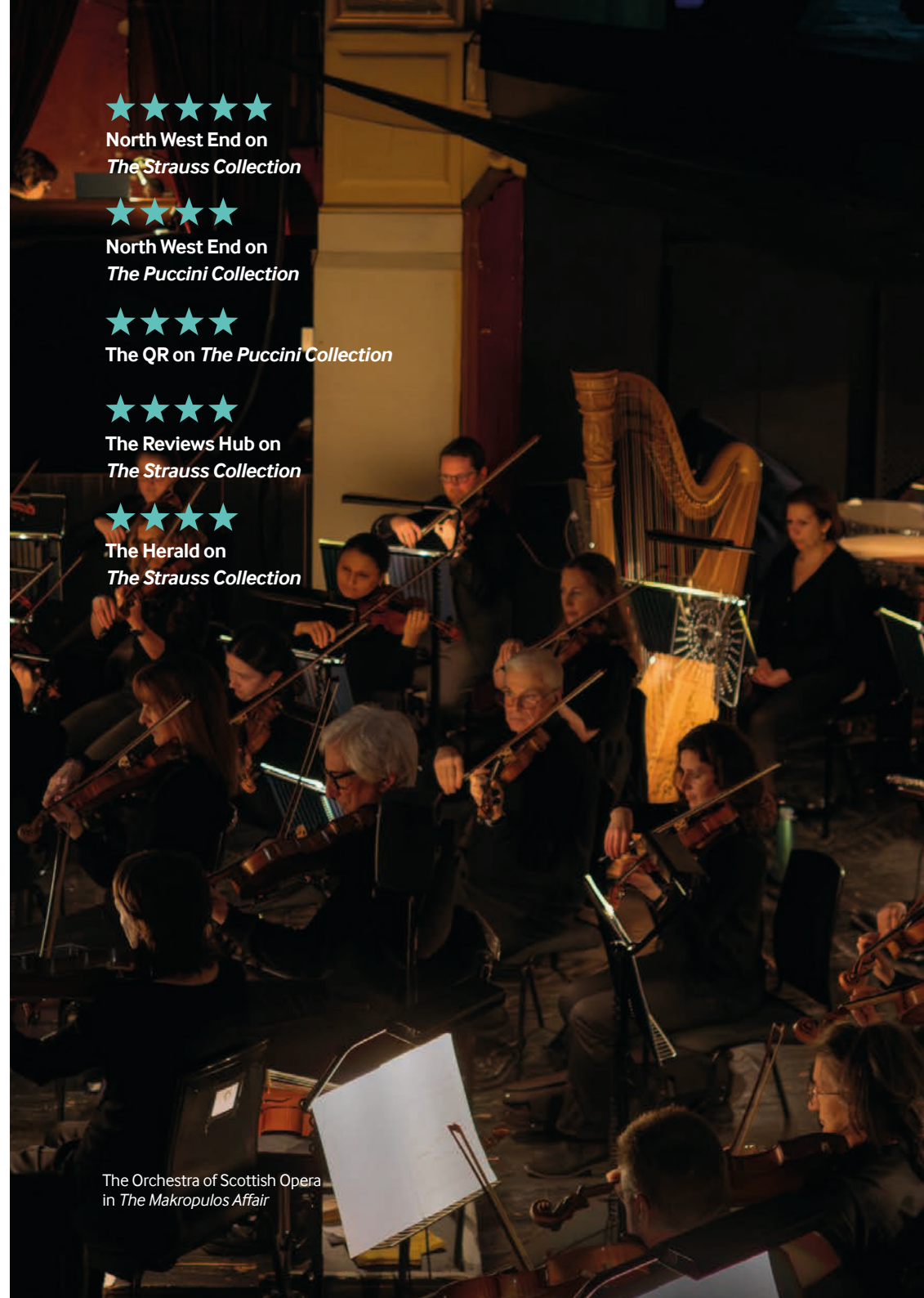
The QR on *The Puccini Collection*



The Reviews Hub on  
*The Strauss Collection*



The Herald on  
*The Strauss Collection*



The Orchestra of Scottish Opera  
in *The Makropulos Affair*

In memory of those who left a legacy to Scottish Opera, these gifts ensure the future of opera for all in Scotland for generations to come.

The Hon J M E Bruce  
Miss Elizabeth Cochrane  
Professor John Dale  
Mrs Margaret Goodwin  
Mr David McCulloch  
Ms Mary Moffat Paterson  
Mr Ron Peet

*The Makropulos Affair, 2025*

## Thank you to our incredible supporters

Our supporters make it possible for Scottish Opera to create and share unforgettable performances across Scotland and beyond, nurture Emerging Artists, retain and develop the skills of opera artisans in Scotland, improve opera's accessibility, share opera with school children, and improve the lives of people living with health issues.

Scottish Opera support through fundraising for 2024/25 totalled £1.1 million. An additional £882,700 was gifted to the Scottish Opera Endowment Trust through legacies, living legacies, and gifts in memory. Our sincere thanks go to all our donors, both long-standing and those who have recently joined us, who made it possible for us to bring opera to stages, classrooms, halls, and homes across Scotland.

We are very fortunate to have 457 annual supporters giving through our Alexander Gibson Circle, Emerging Artists programme, Education Angels scheme, Music Director's Circle and New Commissions Circle, and 945 Friends of Scottish Opera.

The grants from 35 Charitable Trusts and Foundations played a vital role in helping us realise our artistic ambitions, deliver essential outreach work, and train and empower our Emerging Artists. Thank you to each of them. Special thanks go to the

Dunard Fund for their committed support and vital contribution to Scottish Opera and the cultural sector in Scotland and the UK.

We also wish to thank the businesses that supported us throughout the year for their continued partnerships and goodwill. Our particular thanks go to Baillie Gifford, with whom we have a long-standing partnership and whose philanthropy has been deeply significant in our work to keep opera available and affordable on stages across Scotland.

The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust, funded through gifts in the Wills of supporters over many years, continues to play a key role in supporting our work. It remains our intention that legacy gifts are directed to the Trust for investment, where careful stewardship means the gifts support Scottish Opera for generations to come. We are honoured to receive these pledges and legacies and take joy in dedicating performances throughout the year to the memory of those who have supported the future of opera in Scotland with these very special gifts. A heartfelt thanks to those 106 members of our Dame Janet Baker Circle who have included Scottish Opera in their Will.

With our warmest thanks,  
**The Scottish Opera Fundraising team**



# Scottish Opera Financial Statement

Scottish Opera's primary source of funding remains grant support from the Scottish Government. The welcome 3.1% increase in the Company's core grant for its 2024/25 Season was the first uplift in over a decade, and that has been backed up by a further 4.1% uplift in core Scottish Government funding for 2025/26 (granted in December 2024). The Company remains very grateful for the Government's continued support, which is fundamental to Scottish Opera remaining a strong coherent organisation. However, the certainty and stability of its financial and artistic planning would be greatly increased by a move to multi-year funding. More broadly, the Company shares the aspiration of many in the arts and culture sector for at least 1% of the Scottish Government's budget to be allocated to culture, bringing Scotland closer to the European average of 1.5%.

Box office successes contributed to the Company's goal of increasing the revenue generated by Scottish Opera for its operations. The environment for philanthropic giving remained challenging, although the Company was bolstered by several major gifts.

It was a particularly successful year in terms of opera hires around the world and building sets, props, and costumes for other companies. Performances of Scottish Opera productions delighted audiences across Europe, Australia, and North America. As well as providing products and services to the global opera community and the UK arts and culture, these activities also serve to strengthen financial stability.

The UK Theatre Tax Relief remains incredibly important to overall financial stability, with the 2024/25 reclaim being just over £2m, around 16% of total income.

2024/25 saw continued challenges with the availability of materials, as well as upwards pressures on the costs of materials, goods, energy, and notably accommodation across Scotland. There was still some pressure on staffing with salaries increasing elsewhere in the economy, although the Company was able to make an inflationary pay award to staff in April. Overall, however, income exceeded expenditure by £0.3m, meaning a modest increase in year end reserves and cash.



*La traviata, 2024*

# Thank you

I close my report by thanking everyone who has made Scottish Opera's 2024/25 financial year a resounding success. I am grateful for the dedication and energy of the many skilled and creative people who choose to work with and for Scottish Opera.

A huge thank you to all those who have attended our performances, engaged with our digital programmes, participated in our outreach activities, and crucially who have donated to and supported the Company with regular and single gifts. We at Scottish Opera are immensely grateful for your support and continually committed to bringing many more dynamic, inventive, and enjoyable years of opera to our communities across the country.

**Alex Reedijk OBE FRC**

General Director



*The Makropulos Affair, 2025*

Photography:  
Kirsty Anderson  
Fraser Band  
Eoin Carey  
Jane Barlow  
Mihaela Bodlovic  
Julie Broadfoot  
James Glossop  
Sally Jubb  
Ruby Pluhar







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

Registered In Scotland Number SC037531  
Scottish Charity Number SC019787

Core funded by



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba