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##### **Press Release**

14 April, 2025

**SCOTTISH OPERA BRINGS POP-UP OPERA TO COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS ACROSS SCOTLAND THIS SUMMER**

Scottish Opera’s much-loved Pop-up Opera tours to audiences all over the country from 31 May, with performances of **Gilbert & Sullivan’s celebrated comic operas** A Little Bit of *The Gondoliers* and **A Little Bit of *The Pirates of Penzance*, and children’s opera,** *Puffy MacPuffer and the Crabbit Canals.*

The Company has joined forces with Scottish Canals to bring public Pop-up performances to the Union Canal, Edinburgh, The Falkirk Wheel, Caledonian Canal Centre in Fort Augustus, The Egg Shed at Crinan Canal, on board a barge in partnership with Forth & Clyde Canal Society, and Stockingfield Bridge in Glasgow, in partnership with North United Communities.

**There will be additional performances in communities at** Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival in Sanquhar, Moniaive, Musselburgh, Cupar, Charlestown, Milngavie, Coatbridge (at Monkland Canal), Lochcarron, Cruden Bay, Kirriemuir, Ayr and East Kilbride.

There will also be free schools performances in Dumfries & Galloway, West Lothian, West Dunbartonshire, North Lanarkshire, Strathcarron, Fort Augustus, Perth, Dundee and Aberdeenshire.

In addition, Scottish Opera will be offering illustration workshops to local primary schools in some venues so they can meet and draw the characters from *Puffy MacPuffer & the Crabbit Canals* before coming along to see the show.

Scottish Opera’s productions use ten specially created illustrations to help the performers — storytellers **Allan Dunn** and **Katie Barnett**, along with singers **Jessica Leary, Holly Teague**, **Colin Murray** and **Paul Grant**, cellist **Andrew Drummond Huggan** and guitarists **Sasha Savaloni** and **Luke Anderson** — present the story.

Scottish Opera’sDirector of Outreach & Education, **Jane Davidson MBE** said: ‘This year we are once again delighted to bring our miniature musical tales to locations across the country.

‘Gilbert & Sullivan’s topsy-turvy nautical adventures will be navigating the waterways from Penzance to Venice, and we will be stopping at some of Scotland’s most beautiful canalside spots.’

Scottish Canals CEO **John Paterson** said: ‘We are delighted to be able to bring opera to our canalside locations this summer.

‘Partnering with Scottish Opera allows us to both deliver a truly unique, entertaining, and accessible experience for all.

‘I would encourage everyone to get out and about this summer, and enjoy some canal magic as our canal corridors become the perfect stage for these performances’

**Cleverly** re-scored by Scottish Opera’s former Head of Music, **Derek Clark**, in A Little Bit of *The Pirates of Penzance*, a young man bound by an overactive sense of duty, a soft-hearted pirate king with a hopeless band of rogues at his side, a beautiful young girl, a very modern major-general and an ineffectual bevy of policemen add to a plot hinging on the technicalities of having a birthday on the 29th of February. What could possibly go wrong?

A Little Bit of *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.

Created specifically for five to eight year olds, with music and words by **Marion Christie,** *Puffy MacPuffer & The Crabbit Canals* is a tale of the five waterways that link Scotland from the North Sea to the Atlantic. Like most families, each one is different: Caledonian – the longest; Crinan – the most beautiful; hard-working Monkland; Union – the fastest; wise old Forth & Clyde. Each one thinks they’re the best. Can an ordinary little puffer boat make them think again?

These 30-minute shows take opera out of the theatre into unexpected places, and are ideal for anyone new to the artform.

Pop-up Opera was originally inspired by the ancient Japanese art of Kamishibai (which roughly translates as ‘paper story’), a form of entertainment where itinerant storytellers travelled between small communities, telling traditional folk tales using a set of small paintings to accompany the narrative.

Pop-up Opera is supported by **Friends of Scottish Opera**.

Tickets are on sale now at [www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/pop-up-opera-2025/](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk/shows/pop-up-opera-2025/)

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

You can follow Scottish Opera on Bluesky, Facebook, Tik-Tok, You Tube and Instagram **@ScottishOpera**

Cast

Storytellers **Allan Dunn**& **Katie Barnett**

Sopranos  **Jessica Leary**& **Holly Teague**

Baritones  **Colin Murray** & **Paul Grant**

Cello **Andrew Drummond Huggan**

Guitar **Sasha Savaloni** & **Luke Anderson**

With illustrations by **Iain Piercy** & **Otto von Beach**

Performance Diary

Public performances

**A' the Airts, Sanquhar**

31 May, 1pm & 3pm

**Glencairn Memorial Institute, Moniaive**

1 June, 1pm & 3pm

**North Esk Parish Church, Musselburgh**

5 June, 7pm (double bill performance)

**Cupar Corn Exchange**

6 June, 7pm (double bill performance)

**Queen’s Hall, Charlestown, Dunfermline**

7 June, 1pm & 3pm

**Lochrin Basin, Edinburgh (Union Canal)**

8 June, 1pm & 3pm (free outdoor performances)

**Milngavie Town Hall**

13 June, 2pm & 4pm

**Summerlee Museum of Scottish Industrial Life, Coatbridge (Monkland Canal)**

14 June, 3pm (free performance), 7pm (ticketed double bill)

**The Falkirk Wheel**

15 June, 1pm & 3pm (free outdoor performances)

**The Lochcarron Centre, Strathcarron**

18 June, 7pm (double bill performance)

**Caledonian Canal Centre, Fort Augustus**

20 June, 7pm (double bill performance)

**The Egg Shed, Lochgilphead (Crinan Canal)**

22 June, 12pm, 1.30pm & 4pm (plus illustration workshop at 11am)

**Port Errol Public Hall, Cruden Bay**

28 June, 2pm & 4pm

**Kirriemuir Town Hall**

29 June, 2pm & 4pm

**The Cutty Sark Centre, Ayr**

2 July, 12pm, 1.30pm & 4pm (plus illustration workshop at The Grain Exchange at 11am)

**Forth & Clyde Canal Society**

3 July, 1pm & 3pm, Kirkintilloch Southbank Marina to Hillhead Basin (30 minute circuit)

**Forth & Clyde Canal Society**

4 July 1pm & 3pm, Glasgow Canal House, Applecross Street to Firhill Basin (30 minute circuit)

**Stockingfield Bridge, near Brassey Street, Glasgow**

5 July, 1pm & 3pm (free outdoor performances)

**East Kilbride Arts Centre**

6 July, 1pm & 3pm (free outdoor performances)

Notes to Editors

**Scottish Canals**

Scottish Canals is responsible to the Scottish Government for the management and development of five of Scotland’s canals as well as the surrounding estate and The Falkirk Wheel.

Built two hundred years ago to fire the Industrial Revolution, today the canals contribute to the Scottish Government agenda of developing a Greener; Healthier; Smarter; Safer and Stronger; and Wealthier and Fairer Scotland by acting as a catalyst for sustainable economic development, regeneration and tourism; contributing to education, biodiversity, heritage and promoting active living and healthier lifestyles.

Today Scottish Canals is utilising these 18th century assets along with innovative technology to tackle modern problems. Through working with partners to create pioneering systems, Scottish Canals is helping to combat flooding and driving positive transformation in some of Scotland’s most disadvantaged areas.

The Forth & Clyde, Union, Monkland, Caledonian and Crinan canals are recognised as Scheduled Monuments and attract 20 million visits per year.

See [www.scottishcanals.co.uk](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.scottishcanals.co.uk%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cemily.henderson%40scottishopera.org.uk%7C2df58a9de78e4c3226b908dd616c3cd8%7Cbb8a0f04f12b4e7294dc794e17ac244f%7C0%7C0%7C638773839702383719%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=WTmapxWR%2FGec2Jn4MXBB3rVCHdW1B6yRNj41XwZwY4c%3D&reserved=0) for more information.



**Scottish Opera**

Scottish Opera is Scotland’s national opera company and the largest performing arts organisation in Scotland. The Company was founded in 1962 by Sir Alexander Gibson with the goal ‘to lay the treasures of opera at the feet of the people of Scotland’, opening with performances of *Madama Butterfly* and *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The 2022/23 season marked its 60th Anniversary.

Scottish Opera’s performance repertoire ranges across five centuries, from the earliest operas to newly commissioned world premieres, balancing favourites with under-explored works. The Company collaborates with the world’s finest singers and creatives, together with The Orchestra of Scottish Opera and choruses for each opera. Recent accolades include a South Bank Sky Arts Award, a Scottish Award for New Music, Sunday Herald Culture Awards, a 2017 UK Theatre Award, and a 2020 RPS Award. The Company took operas to Brooklyn in 2017 and Adelaide in 2020, and the 2022/23 season saw productions first staged at Scottish Opera appearing in Santa Fe, Madrid, Toulouse, and Los Angeles. The 60th Anniversary Season included the UK fully staged premiere of Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* and the Company premiere of Puccini’s *Il trittico*.

The Company tours extensively across Scotland to ensure performances are within reach of as many of the country’s dispersed population as possible. This is one of the most extensive touring programmes of any European opera company and a much-valued contribution to Scotland’s cultural and artistic life, particularly in remote and island communities.

The Company’s Education & Outreach programme, the oldest in Europe, includes an annual in-person and digital Primary Schools Tour, bringing children the opportunity to perform their own specially commissioned piece alongside 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 committed to making opera for all, presenting opera at the highest possible standards in theatres across the country, outdoors on tour, and digital audiences around the world. The Company’s 2021 production of *The Gondoliers*, filmed live at Festival Theatre Edinburgh, is available on BBC iPlayer. Scottish Opera’s On Screen productions are available to watch at [www.scottishopera.org.uk/what-s-on/opera-on-screen](http://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*, Menotti’s *The Telephone*, *The Diary of One Who Disappeared*, *Mister MacNeep Has Lost His Sheep*, and Samuel Bordoli and Jenni Fagan’s *The Narcissistic Fish*.

Renowned for their flexibility and craftsmanship, Scottish Opera productions are frequently presented by opera houses across the globe. Two of our 60th Anniversary productions are presented by Welsh National Opera: Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* is in Cardiff, Llandudno, Bristol, Plymouth, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Southampton from September to November 2023. Puccini’s *Il trittico* can be seen in Cardiff in June 2024.

Following on from a run at the Opera Comique in Paris, Detroit Opera perform our 2019 production of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves* in April 2024 (having just presented *Ainadamar).* In addition, our 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* is performed twice in Canada: at Vancouver Opera in February 2024, and at Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in April and May 2024.

Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



**For additional press details please contact:** Emily Henderson, Press Manager, 0141 242 0511, emily.henderson@scottishopera.org.uk