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##### Press Release

30 April, 2025

**SCOTTISH OPERA ANNOUNCES 2025/26 SEASON AS MUSIC DIRECTOR STUART STRATFORD CELEBRATES 10 YEARS WITH THE COMPANY**

* **In its 63rd year, Music Director Stuart Stratford celebrates a decade at the Company, and Scottish Opera presents a bold new Season of work including a world premiere, two revivals, a composer collection, its first presentation of Wagner in 13 years, and a packed programme of touring, outreach, and education work**
* **World premiere of *The Great Wave*, by composer Dai Fujikura and Scottish librettist Harry Ross, based on the life of the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai**
* **Welcome return of revivals of Barbe & Doucet’s hugely popular production of Puccini’s *La bohème*, and Sir Thomas Allen’s acclaimed production of Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro***
* **Launch of new Children’s Chorus and Community Chorus in Edinburgh for NHS Lothian staff**
* **Opera in Concert includes Wagner’s*Tristan und Isolde*andTchaikovsky’s *Heroines & Heroes:* Selections from *Eugene Onegin, Iolanta,*** *and* ***The Maid of Orleans***
* **Double bill of *L’heure espagnole* by Maurice Ravel and *The Bear* by William Walton at Lammermuir Festival, and later in Glasgow and Edinburgh**
* **Scottish Opera’s commitment to bring opera right across Scotland continues with *Opera Highlights*, *Pop-up Opera* and Primary Schools Tour**

Scottish Opera has unveiled its 2025/26 Season, which features *The Great Wave*, *La bohème, The Marriage of Figaro, The Bear, L’heure espagnole, Tristan und Isolde,* Tchaikovsky’s *Heroines & Heroes:* Selections from *Eugene Onegin, Iolanta, and The Maid of Orleans, Opera Highlights* and *Pop-up Opera*.

This comes on the back of a successful 2024/25 Season, which included five-star productions of *Oedipus Rex*, *Albert Herring* and *The Makropulos Affair*, as well as sold-out screenings of the Company’s award-winning animated opera short film, *Josefine*.

This Season illustrates Scottish Opera’s continuing commitment to keeping opera accessible and entertaining, and performed to the highest possible standards for audiences all over the country.

The 2025/26 Season also marks 10 years since **Stuart Stratford** joined Scottish Opera as Music Director. He continues to demonstrate his dedication to bringing as much opera as possible to Scottish audiences, championing new and modern music as well as ‘forgotten’ gems, through his inclusive approach and artistic curiosity.

**Stuart Stratford**, Scottish Opera Music Director said: ‘I’m incredibly proud to announce this new Season, which also marks my tenth year with Scottish Opera. It’s been a busy and hugely rewarding decade, and I extend my warmest thanks to my talented and creative colleagues, as well as audiences for making me feel so welcome and embracing our shows.

‘Opera is a vital and dynamic art form, weaving together storytelling, music, and theatrical spectacle to captivate and move audiences. With its ability to evoke deep emotions, opera offers a transformative experience, bringing classic works like *La bohème* and *Tristan und Isolde*to life while, also championing world premieres that showcase Scottish creativity and introducing new generations to the magic of live performance.

‘Whether through heart-wrenching tragedy or exhilarating drama, opera in Scotland continues to inspire, challenge, and transport audiences to new worlds.’

A balance of international and home grown talent appears throughout the Season.

Making their debuts with the Company are **Daniel Barrett**, **Mario Chang, Ava Dodd, James Geidt,** **Edward Hawkins, Annemarie Kremer, Natalia Kutateladze, Robert Lewis, Luvo Maranti, Daisuke Ohyama, Ceferina Penny, Ian Rucker** and **Collin Shay.**

There are welcome return visits from **Josef Jeongmeen Ahn, Rosie Aldridge, Katie**

**Barnett, Jeni Bern, Mark Le Brocq, Francis Church, Lauren Fagan, Paul Grant,**

**Chloe Harris,** **Gwyn Hughes Jones, Emyr Wyn Jones, Edward Jowle, Kira Kaplan,**

**Jessica Leary, Hye-Youn Lee, Rhian Lois, Alexandra Lowe, Jamie MacDougall,**

**Simone McIntosh, Colin Murray, Shengzhi Ren,** **Julieth Lozano Rolong, Lea**

**Shaw, Holly Teague, Callum Thorpe, Roland Wood** and **Dingle Yandell.**

**Alex Reedijk**, Scottish Opera General Director, said: ‘I wish to give special thanks to our incredibly talented Music Director, Stuart Stratford, for all his hard work and dedication to Scottish Opera during the past 10 years. It’s a joy to collaborate with him.

‘We open with a double bill of Ravel’s *L’heure espagnole* and Walton’s *The Bear*, followed by Barbe & Doucet’s vibrant production of Puccini’s *La bohème* that has delighted audiences the world over since its 2016 premiere in Scotland. Tchaikovsky’s *Heroines & Heroes* celebrates the iconic Russian composer’s lyricism before Christmas. 2026 opens with the highly anticipated world premiere of Dai Fujikura and Harry Ross’ *The Great Wave*, a new opera weaving the life of Hokusai with meditations on art, family, legacy, and the higher purpose of all in life. It is a must-see event for fans of new opera, Japanese art, and biographical drama.

‘In March, we present our first Wagner in 13 years with a concert staging of *Tristan und Isolde* brilliantly re-envisioned by director Justin Way. The Season then ends with Sir Thomas Allen’s joyous, beautiful production of Mozart’s *The Marriage of Figaro.*

‘Our *Pop-up Opera* tour is on the road, and *Opera Highlights* returns with both an autumn and a spring tour covering 35 locations and incorporating school and community workshops for all to get involved in opera. Before the main 2025/26 Season starts, you can hear our regular chorus members in Opera Australia’s production of Gluck’s *Orpheus and Eurydice* at the Edinburgh International Festival.

‘It is hugely heartening to see continued critical acclaim and audience enthusiasm for our work; the loyal support of our audiences has made this ambitious Season possible. We are immensely grateful to everyone who buys a ticket or generously supports the Company as a Friend or Patron. We are as ever thankful to the Scottish Government for ongoing core funding.

‘We warmly invite you to be a part of our Season, and look forward to welcoming you soon!’

**SEASON 2025/26**

**Opera in Concert: *L’heure espagnole* & *The Bear***

Scottish Opera’s 2025/26 Season opens at Lammermuir Festival in East Lothian this September with the concert staging of two caustic comedies of infidelity: Maurice Ravel’s *L’heure espagnole*, and William Walton’s *The Bear*.

**Alexandra Cravero** (*Thérèse 2022)* conducts The Orchestra of Scottish Opera inthis new double bill, which also tours to Glasgow and Edinburgh. **Jacopo Spirei** directs and designs are by **Kenneth MacLeod** (*Opera Highlights* Spring 2025).

Marking 150 years since Ravel’s birth, *L’heure espagnole* sees a turn from the melodramatic to the farcical. A clockmaker’s serially unfaithful wife must come up with increasingly creative ways to hide her lovers over a series of quick-witted and quick-moving scenes.

*The Bear*, an adaptation of Chekhov’s play, follows a widow’s ostentatious commitment to her late husband – which sits at odds with his very public love affairs. But when a creditor comes knocking, she finds that it is never too late for a second chance at romance!

While the two composers’ sound worlds are unique, they both explore the workings of imperfect human hearts with wry empathy.

The cast includes former Emerging Artist **Lea Shaw** (*The Makropulos Affair* 2025) with **Chloe Harris, Jamie MacDougall** and **Edward Jowle** (all *Trial by Jury & A Matter of Misconduct* 2025), **Daniel Barrett**, and **Luvo Maranti**.

*L’heure espagnole* & *The Bear* are supported by**The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust**.

***La bohème***

In October 2025 is a revival of Barbe & Doucet’s 2017 production of Puccini’s heart-breaking *La bohème,* which opens in Glasgow and tours to Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh.

Set in the flea markets of Paris, this production – by the team behind 2014’s hit *Don Pasquale* – is inspired by the Jazz Age of Josephine Baker, and full of their trademark colour, character and style.

Scottish Opera Music Director, **Stuart Stratford**, conducts **Hye–Youn Lee** (*La traviata* 2024) who returns to play Mimi after originating the role in this production in 2017, alongside a cast of newcomers including **Mario Chang** as Rodolfo. Joining them are **Roland Wood** (*The Makropulos Affair* 2025), **Rhian Lois** (*The Merry Widow* 2025), **Callum Thorpe** (*Oedipus Rex* 2024), **Edward Jowle** (*Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* 2025), and **Jamie MacDougall** (*Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* 2025).

*La bohème* is supported by **The Scottish Opera Syndicate.**

**Opera in Concert:Tchaikovsky’s *Heroines & Heroes:* Selections from *Eugene Onegin, Iolanta*,** and ***The Maid of Orleans***

Scottish Opera Music Director **Stuart Stratford** conducts *Tchaikovsky’s Heroines* & *Heroes* in Usher Hall Edinburgh in December 2025.

With a cast including **Lauren Fagan** (*Ainadamar* 2022), **Josef Jeongmeen Ahn** (*Don Pasquale* 2024), **Natalia Kutateladze** and **Robert Lewis** in their Company debuts, this concert features extended excerpts from three of the iconic Russian composer’s best works, all of which centre complex and richly drawn women.

*Eugene Onegin* is a deeply moving tale of unrequited love and high society life, *The Maid of Orleans* is a romantic retelling of the story of Joan of Arc, and *Iolanta,* the last opera Tchaikovsky composed, is a dreamlike fairy tale of a blind princess discovering the world outside her isolated garden home. Allowing audiences to discover his music **—** which blended French and German influences with Russian traditions **—** beyond *The Nutcracker*, this is the perfect winter night out.

*Tchaikovsky’s Heroines & Heroes* is supported by **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust** and **Friends of Scottish Opera**.

***The Great Wave***

In February 2026 is the much-anticipated world premiere of*The Great Wave*,byJapanesecomposer **Dai Fujikura** and Scottish librettist **Harry Ross.** Telling the story behind one of the world’s most famous pieces of art, it opens in Glasgow and tours to Edinburgh.

Conducted by **Stuart Stratford**, this bold international co-production with KAJIMOTO is directed by **Satoshi Miyagi**, and interweaves the personal family narrative of Katsushika Hokusai and his daughter Ōi, two generations of artists who redefined Japanese painting and print-making. It uncovers the story of his world famous woodblock print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, and explores the artistic genius, financial struggles, and illicit trade that made it possible.

With set designs by **Junpei Kiz,** costume designs by **Kayo Takahashi Deschene** and props designs by **Eri Fukasawa**, the cast includes **Daisuke Ohyama** as Hokusai and **Julieth Lozano Rolong** (*Ainadamar* 2022) as Ōi. They are joined by **Shengzhi Ren**, **Edward Hawkins**, **Chloe Harris**, **Luvo Maranti** and **Collin Shay**.

This international collaboration both on-and off-stage with KAJIMOTO builds on centuries of cultural exchange between Scotland and Japan – not least in Hokusai’s influence on the Glasgow Boys and Charles Rennie Mackintosh at the turn of the 20th century.

This KAJIMOTO co-production is unique as it not only enhances Scottish Opera’s resources and reach through international collaboration, but also provides special training opportunities for young Japanese arts professionals, continuing the Company’s commitment to the arts workforce of the future on a world scale.

*The Great Wave* is supported by **The Alexander Gibson Circle**, **The Great Wave Syndicate**, **Bernard & Jane Nelson** and the **Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan/Japan Arts Council.**

**Opera in Concert: *Tristan und Isolde***

Wagner’s epic story of love, lust and death, *Tristan und Isolde*, opens in March 2026 for two performances only in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

**Stuart Stratford** conducts The Orchestra of Scottish Opera, and **Justin Way**, who directed all of Wagner’s operas in concerts at the BBC Proms in 2013, brings his expertise in concert staging to probe every dramatic nuance of these complicated characters. Lighting designs are by **Lizzie Powell**.

The cast includes **Gwyn Hughes Jones** (*Tosca* 2019) as Tristan and **Annemarie Kremer** makes her anticipated Scottish Opera debut as Isolde. They are joined by **Rosie Aldridge** (*The Pirates of Penzance* 2013), **Roland Wood** (*The Makropulos Affair* 2025), **Dingle Yandell** (*Daphne* 2023), and **Mark Le Brocq** (*The Makropulos Affair* 2025).

*Tristan und Isolde* is supported by **The Scottish Opera Endowment Trust** and **Friends of Scottish Opera.**

***The Marriage of Figaro***

The 2025/26 Season draws to a close with **Sir Thomas Allen’s** production of Mozart’s timeless tale of social revolution and change, *The Marriage of Figaro*.

The great British baritone’s *The Marriage of* *Figaro* is full of humour, subtlety and wit. Conducted by **Dane Lam** (*Carmen* 2023) and **Susannah Wapshott** (*Don Pasquale* 2024) the show tours to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness in May and June 2026.

**Simon Higlett’s** sumptuous designs provide the backdrop for this much-loved production of an opera that is as relevant today as ever. This revival is presented in English, letting the laugh-out-loud comedy speak for itself.

Mozart’s bubbling, energetic score shows him at his theatrical best – with a true genius for getting to the heart of each character. **Edward Jowle** (*Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* 2025) and **Emyr Wyn Jones** (*Oedipus Rex* 2024) share the lead role of Figaro, with **Ava Dodd** and Emerging Artist **Kira Kaplan (***Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* 2025)as Susanna, **Ian Rucker** as Count Almaviva, **Alexandra Lowe** (*The French Collection* 2022) as Countess Almaviva, and **Simone McIntosh** (*The Barber of Seville* 2023), and Emerging Artist **Chloe Harris** (*Trial by Jury* & *A Matter of Misconduct!* 2025) alternating Cherubino. Also in the cast are **Jeni Bern** (*The Magic Flute* 2019) as Marcellina, **Edward Hawkins** as Doctor Bartolo, **Luvo Maranti** as Don Basilio/Don Curio and **Francis Church** as Antonio.

***Opera Highlights***

Scottish Opera produces world-class work at every scale. The Company’s extensive touring programme is one of the largest of any European opera company, ensuring performances are within reach of as many of Scotland’s dispersed population as possible.

*Opera Highlights* goes on the road again in Autumn 2025 and Spring 2026, visiting 35 venues around Scotland, in a vibrant new production directed by **Emma Doherty**.

In the Autumn, Music Director/Pianist **Meghan Rhoades** accompanies performers including **James Geidt**, **Chloe Harris**, **Luvo Maranti** and **Ceferina Penny**, and in the Spring, **Toby Stanford** accompanies singers including **Daniel Barrett** and **Kira Kaplan**, with more cast names to be announced.

In this one-of-a-kind show, programmed by **Fiona MacSherry**, Scottish Opera’s Head of Music, the playlist cleverly combines a fabulous collection of much-loved classics with a treasure trove of lesser-known pieces.

The Autumn tour runs from 2 October–22 November, visiting East Kilbride, Ayr, Gartmore, Brechin, Ellon, Crail, Castle Douglas, Melrose, Crawfordjohn, Birnam, Nairn, Lochinver, Glenuig, Castlebay, Lochranza, Johnstone, and Edinburgh.

The Spring 2026 tour is from 3 February–12 March, and goes Glasgow, Tillicoultry, Helensburgh, Yetholm, Newton Stewart, Kilmarnock, Dalmally, Dornie, Stornoway, Gairloch, Newtonmore, Banchory, Fraserburgh, Cromarty, Orkney, Wick, Lairg, and Livingstone.

As well as the live performances, Scottish Opera is running school and community workshops alongside the tour, with venues to be announced soon.

*Opera Highlights* is supported by **Friends of Scottish Opera** and **JTH Charitable Trust**.

**Pop-up Opera**

The nautically-themed Pop-up Opera tours to audiences all over the country this summer, kicking off on 31 May at Dumfries & Galloway Arts Festival in Sanquhar, Moniaive, Musselburgh, Cupar, Charlestown, Edinburgh, Milngavie, Coatbridge, Falkirk, Millbrae, Fort Augustus, Lochgilphead, Cruden Bay, Kirriemuir, Ayr, Glasgow, and East Kilbride.

Scottish Opera has also joined forces with Scottish Canals to bring 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.

Audiences can catch *A Little Bit of* *The Gondoliers* and ***A Little Bit of* *The Pirates of Penzance*. Gilbert & Sullivan’s celebrated comic operas have been** re-scored by Scottish Opera’s former Head of Music, **Derek Clark**. These 30-minute shows take opera out of the theatre into unexpected places, and are ideal for anyone new to the artform who would like to try a taster of these classics.

Schoolchildren can look forward to the tour popping up at the various locations for free performances of *Puffy MacPuffer and the Crabbit Canals*, which was created specifically for five to eight year olds. With words and music by **Marion Christie**, and illustrations by **Iain Piercy**,it is a tale of the five waterways that link Scotland from the North Sea to the Atlantic.

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.

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

**Emerging Artists**

The Scottish Opera Emerging Artistsprogramme offers rising talent a period of full-time work with the Company to help launch their careers.

Returning for a second Season are soprano **Kira Kaplan,** mezzo-soprano **Chloe Harris**, bass-baritone **Edward Jowle,** and repetiteur **Meghan Rhoades.**

New to the programme are baritonetenor **Luvo Maranti**, baritone **Daniel Barrett,** repetiteur **Toby Stanford** andThe Elizabeth Salvesen Costume Trainee, which will be announced soon.

The Emerging Artist singers perform in a number of this Season’s productions and tours, and in recitals at the University of St Andrews, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, and the University of Glasgow.

They are supported by **Scottish Opera’s Emerging Artist Benefactors**, **Elizabeth Salvesen**, **Fidelio Charitable Trust**, **The H R Creswick Charitable Trust**, and **The Rowena Alison Goffin Charitable Trust**.

**National Opera Studio**

As one of the National Opera Studio’s partners, Scottish Opera is delighted to host the 2025/26 cohort – a group comprising some of the brightest rising star singers and repetiteurs from around the world – for a one-week residency of coaching with the Company's Music department and a guest director. The result is a showcase performance for Scottish Opera supporters and guests at the Company’s Production Studio.

**Conducting collaborations with the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

Stuart Stratford, a regular guest tutor at the RCS, and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera are training the next generation of conductors alongside the Conservatoire through initiatives began in the 2024/25 Season and continuing throughout the 2025/26 Season. Under Stuart’s guidance, RCS MMus conductors enjoy workshop sessions with The Orchestra of Scottish opera and RCS student soloists to work on concertos in depth. The Company is also pleased to begin a new relationship with the Leverhulme Conducting Fellowship, facilitated through the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, with the Fellow gaining training and performance opportunities at Scottish Opera, in the lead up to the Conservatoire’s Advanced Artist Diploma beginning in September 2026.

**Opera in schools**

Scottish Opera’s children’s operas make learning fun and creative. Over the years, the Primary Schools Tour has inspired over 850,000 children across all 32 Local Authority areas.

This year’s show is *The Dragon of the Western Sea,* composed by **Alan Penman** with words by **Ross Stenhouse**, making its return with a new digital version alongside the in-person tour. It can be facilitated with an in-person workshop day led by Scottish Opera Teaching Artists with full rental of props and costumes, or entirely within the classroom by teachers themselves. In both, teachers receive all materials in advance.

In-person tour booking opens June 2025 for dates from February – June 2026, and a digital tour is available from January 2026.

Supported by **The Catherine Cookson Charitable Trust**, **The David and June Gordon Memorial Trust**, **The McGlashan Charitable Trust**, **The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust**, **New Park Educational Trust**, **The Pear Tree Fund for Music**, **The Springboard Charitable Trust**, and **The W M Mann Foundation**.

Scottish Opera also offers teaching resources for Secondary School pupils. Having worked alongside Largs Academy to develop the materials suitable for young people, *The Elixir of Love:* Three Ways to Stage an Operais a free teaching resource for teachers. Pupils learn about music, drama, and art and design – incorporating elements of history, storytelling, and critical thinking – as they explore Donizetti’s comedy through three interpretations.

Touring primary schools in October and November 2025, *The Giant’s Harp* is an interactive educational singing workshop and performance pairing for pupils in Primary 3-4, which has been created by mezzo-soprano **Lea Shaw** and harpist **Sharron Griffiths**,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 learn about the long history of this instrument and the many continents and cultures where it can be found through singing, movement, narration, puppetry, and music familiar and new.

Disney Musicals in Schools collaborates with primary schools with no previous engagement with the arts and often facing a range of social and economic challenges. Teaching Artists guide pupils through rehearsals for special adaptations of Disney musicals and, crucially, provide training for teachers to build their pupils’ skills and confidence through the performance arts, creating a sustainable arts legacy for the future. Scottish Opera is Disney Musical in Schools’ first Scottish partner, and this is the fourth successful year of the programme.

This Season, Scottish Opera expands its partnership with key specialist music schools across Scotland. Aberdeen City Music School at Dyce Academy join St Mary’s Music School (Edinburgh) and the Music School of Douglas Academy (Glasgow) where Scottish Opera professionals support, mentor, increasing the numbers of young singers exploring opera as a career.

Scottish Opera is proud to be involved in the Glasgow 850 celebrations, a yearlong inclusive, citywide, programme of events and activities that reflect on how the city has transformed, particularly over the last 50 years.

On May 29 at SEC Armadillo, a chorus of 300 children from across Glasgow’s schools perform *Built on the Clyde,* a mini-opera with lyrics by **Allan Dunn** and music by **Alan Penman** celebrating the iconic river’s rich contribution to Scotland’s largest city on its 850th anniversary.

Premiered during the opening night of the three-night Clyde Chorus, *Built on the Clyde* will subsequently be available as a free digital resource pack for all Glasgow primary schools.

Supported by **The Glasgow City Heritage Trust,** **The Gordon Fraser Charitable Trust**, **The Hugh Fraser Foundation**, **The JTH Charitable Trust**, and **The W A Cargill Fund**.

**Memory Spinners**

Scottish Opera continues to offer its Memory Spinners project for those living with dementia. The free project uses music, storytelling, movement, and visual arts to help Glasgow-based people living with dementia get creative, and form new support networks. Throughout each 8-week term, they share memories that are then incorporated into a relaxed performance for friends and family.

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**

The ground-breaking online programme, *Breath Cycle*, was formed with the Respiratory and Cystic Fibrosis Medicine team at NHS Glasgow. Designed to benefit those living with conditions affecting lung health – particularly Long COVID – free resources introduce participants to vocal exercises and breathing techniques. The response is overwhelmingly positive, with participants citing improvement in breathing, energy levels and mood. More information is available on the Scottish Opera website, where a series of short tutorials and exercises can be accessed, or those interested can sign up for weekly online sessions and song writing workshops.

The Covid Composers Songbook, aselection of songs written by *Breath Cycle*participants, has been recorded for anyone to use and enjoy. Visit Scottish Opera’s website to download the full collection.

*Breath Cycle* has grown from its original work with cystic fibrosis patients to include those recovering from Long COVID, then developing further to offer broader wellbeing support. It was recently nominated for the 2025 Classical:NEXT Innovation Award.

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**.

**Community Choir**

Places are available in Scottish Opera’s Community Choir, open to adults of all ages and conducted by **Katy Lavinia Cooper**, which starts up again in September. Set up in 2012, the Choir gives members an opportunity to sing a wide variety of music – folk, world, classical, opera, popular, and more – in a supportive atmosphere, with sharings each term and opportunities to perform in full operas. They do not need to be able to read music or have previous experience. The Community Choir most recently performed in the Company’s production of *Oedipus Rex* at Edinburgh International Festival in 2024.

Supported by **Cruach Trust**, **The Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust**, **W M Mann Foundation**, **Souter Charitable Trust**, and **Scottish Opera’s Education Angels**.

**New: Children’s Chorus**

New for 2025/26, Scottish Opera launches a Children’s Chorus led by Chorus Director **Susannah Wapshott** and the Company’s Outreach & Education department to learn not only music and singing through the Kodály method but also stagecraft, performance skills, and choreography. This year-round programme focuses on building the skills, confidence, and passion for opera, an art form that combines singing and orchestral music, drama, visuals, and movement. As their confidence develops, the chorus members will experience a range of performance opportunities from specially commissioned music theatre pieces to opportunities to be considered for children’s roles in a Scottish Opera mainstage production.

**New: Edinburgh Tonic Arts Chorus**

In Spring 2025, after the success of its Glasgow Community Chorus and a mixed chorus for *Oedipus Rex* at the 2024 Edinburgh International Festival, 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 previous experience. The Scottish Opera & NHS Lothian Chorus focuses on the many performance elements needed onstage in an integrated, music-led drama and aims to develop participants’ confidence in performing.

**Accessible Performances**

Scottish Opera is offering a range of accessible performances, to ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy a live opera experience that is inclusive and welcoming. With Access Opera performances and audio-description available this year, the Company aims to make it as easy as possible to attend the opera.

Specially created Access performances of *La bohème*and *The Marriage of Figaro* run alongside the mainstage productions in Glasgow and Edinburgh. With Dementia Friendly values at their core, afternoon Access performances are for those who enjoy a more relaxed opera experience. With a shorter running time (under two hours including an interval) and tickets at just £12.50, these performances are open to all, including those who may be living with dementia or Long COVID, more comfortable at a shorter show, struggling to get to evening performances, or would simply benefit from the more relaxed atmosphere.

Those who are visually impaired can also take advantage of audio-described performances where a live commentary is provided by a specialist audio describer during the show, describing the action on stage without compromising the music. As part of the experience, a recorded introduction to the opera is available in advance, as well as a live audio introduction before the start of the performance.

At select performances, audiences can book on to a free Touch Tour to become more familiar with the set, scenery, props and costumes. Pre-show talks are also available. These half-hour sessions delve into the detail of each opera, enhancing the audience enjoyment and extending knowledge of the piece.

Supported by **Scottish Opera’s Education Angels**.

**The Small Magician**

Returning by popular demand after its creation last season, *The Small Magician* is a trauma-aware, inclusive, accessible vocal education resource, created by former Scottish Opera Emerging Artist **Lea Shaw**. Itenables participants to healthily challenge and build their vocal technique and knowledge from the comfort of their own home or chosen space.

Visit scottishopera.org.uk/the-small-magician/ to access workbooks and resources covering breath-work, texture, diction, intonation, pattern, embodiment, and recovery.

**New: The Scottish Opera Podcast**

Launched at the end of 2024, Scottish Opera’s debut podcast allows audiences to step into the exciting world of opera. Hosted by **Jamie MacDougall**, tenor and BBC Radio Scotland presenter, each new guest brings their unique perspective about what goes on behind the scenes at a national opera company. Every month, hear from directors and designers who dramatise these stories, conductors who interpret music new and old, and singers from international stars to dedicated Community Chorus members.

Expect deep dives on beloved classics, previews of world premieres, and explorations of opera as a tool for education and wellbeing. With each new episode, Scottish Opera celebrates the talent, dedication, humanity, and creativity that makes opera special and offer new angles on this vibrant art form.

Whether you're an opera aficionado or just dipping your toe into this world, The Scottish Opera Podcast is your window into the craft, challenges, and diversity of opera today.

Available on Spotify and Amazon Music, this podcast is produced in partnership with City of Glasgow College and supported by students on broadcasting courses at the college.

**Developing the Young Workforce**

Working from recently identified gaps in the Scottish Arts Sector, Developing the Young Workforce seeks to not only train people entering the workforce in necessary industry skills but also bolster resilience, empathy, compassion, and other soft skills that facilitate a strong, lifelong career in the arts. As a national performing company, Scottish Opera is committed to ensuring the local professional pipeline is strong and sustainable for not only this generation but the next generation of arts workers. This programme provides structure, support, and development opportunities alongside upskilling training.

**New Rotterdam Wharf**

In October 2024, Glasgow City Council’s Planning Applications Committee approved Scottish Opera’s application for a new headquarters at the site known locally as New Rotterdam Wharf.

This involves the redevelopment of the Scottish Opera Production Studios site at Edington Street, and the design, which has been developed by Page\Park Architects, is for a thriving, mixed-use development on a site adjacent to the Glasgow branch of the Forth & Clyde Canal, which has laid derelict since the 1980s.

The Company is excited that momentum is building on the project, and more details will be shared soon.

**Digital productions**

Announced last Season, Scottish Opera’s first ever animated opera short *Josefine*, produced in partnership with Maestro Broadcasting, has been screened all over the world, from Glasgow, to New York and Venice.

This 14-minute film, inspired by Franz Kafka’s last short story ‘Josefine the Singer’, is directed by Scottish Opera’s resident filmmaker **Antonia Bain** and composed by former Emerging Artist Composer-in-Residence **Samuel Bordoli,** with a libretto co-authored by the pair. The Executive Producer is **Gemma Dixon**, and the Animation Director is **Sophie Bird**.

The recording features 2022/23 Emerging Artist **Zoe Drummond**, a chorus including **Osian Wyn Bowen**, **Phil Gault**, **Jane Monari**, **Frances Morrison-Allen**, **Colin Murray**, **Sarah Power**, **Christian Schneeberger**, **Sarah Shorter** and The Orchestra of Scottish Opera conducted by **Susannah Wapshott**, Scottish Opera’s Chorus Director.

In the past year, *Josefine* had its UK premiere at Northampton Film Festival, Scottish premiere at Glasgow Short Film Festival, plus screenings at The Scotsman Picturehouse in Edinburgh, and has been shown at the Film Festival at Vienna’s Rathausplatz and Venice Biennale.

At the 2024 Messina Film Festival – Cinema & Opera, *Josefine* was chosen from 1400 entries to receive the Emi Mammoliti Award for best short film. This award adds to the growing list of laurels for Josefine which was named Best Animation at this year’s Cannes Arts Film Fest, Mannheim Arts and Film Festival Winner for Best Family and Children Friendly, and received an Honourable Mention in Animation. It has been screened at festivals all over the world, including Vienna’s Rathausplatz and the Venice Biennale.

Further opportunities to see the UK’s first newly commissioned opera made specifically for animation, will be announced through the Season.

*Josefine* is supported by **Scottish Opera’s New Commissions Circle**.

-ENDS-

Further information on the 2025/26 Season can be found at [**www.scottishopera.org.uk**](http://www.scottishopera.org.uk) from 10am on 30 April.

Tickets go on sale for supporters on 8 May, and on public sale from 22 May.

Notes to Editors

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 an International Opera Award 2023 Nomination for *Il trittico*, 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 and OperaVision. 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 have been presented by co-producer Welsh National Opera: Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar* was in Cardiff, Llandudno, Bristol, Plymouth, Birmingham, Milton Keynes and Southampton from September to November 2023. Puccini’s *Il trittico* was performed in Cardiff in October 2024.

Following on from a run at the Opera Comique in Paris, Detroit Opera performed our 2019 production of Missy Mazzoli’s *Breaking the Waves* in April 2024. It performed *Ainadamar,* which was also presented by The Metropolitan Opera in New York in autumn 2024. This May, *Breaking the Waves* opens at Houston Grand Opera in a co-production of Houston Grand Opera, Opera Ventures, Scottish Opera, Théâtre National de l’Opéra Comique, and Adelaide Festival that began life in Scotland.

In addition, our 2014 production of Donizetti’s *Don Pasquale* was performed twice in Canada: at Vancouver Opera in February 2024, and at Canadian Opera Company in Toronto in April and May 2024.

**For additional press details please contact:**

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Scottish Opera is supported by the Scottish Government.



Performances

***L’heure espagnole* (Ravel) & *The Bear*** **(Walton)**

**Lammermuir Festival**

**St Mary’s Church, Haddington**

4 September 7.30pm

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

18 & 22 October 7.15pm

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

15 November 7.15pm

Pre-show talks

22 October & 15 November

Audio description / Touch Tours

22 October & 15 November

***La bohème* (Puccini)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

11 • 15 • 21 • 23 • 25 October 7.15pm

19 October 3pm

Relaxed Access performance 24 October 3pm

**His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen**

30 October 7.15pm

1 November 3pm

**Eden Court, Inverness**

6 November, 7.15pm

8 November, 5pm

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

14 • 18 • 20 • 22 November 7.15pm

16 November 3pm

Relaxed Access performance 21 November 3pm

Pre-show talks

23 October, 1 November, 8 November, 20 November

Audio description / Touch Tours

19 October, 1 November, 8 November, 16 November

***Tchaikovsky’s Heroines & Heroes***

**Usher Hall, Edinburgh**

10 December 7.30pm

***The Great Wave (*Fujikura)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

12 & 14 February 2026, 7.15pm

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

19 & 21 February 7.15pm

Pre-show talks

14 & 21 February

Audio description / Touch Tours

14 & 21 February

***Tristan und Isolde*** (Wagner)

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

7 March 3pm

**Usher Hall, Edinburgh**

11 March 5.30pm

***The Marriage of Figaro* (Mozart)**

**Theatre Royal Glasgow**

9 • 13 • 15 • 20 • 23 May 2026, 7.15pm

17 May 3pm

Relaxed Access performance 22 May 3pm

**Festival Theatre Edinburgh**

29 May 7.15pm

31 May 3pm

2 • 4 • 6 June 7.15pm

Relaxed Access performance 5 June 3pm

**His Majesty’s Theatre, Aberdeen**

11 June 7.15pm

13 June 7.15pm

**Eden Court, Inverness**

18 & 20 June 7.15pm

Pre-show talks

15 May, 4 June, 13 June, 20 June

Audio description / Touch Tours

17 May, 31 May, 13 June, 20 June

***Opera Highlights***

**Autumn 2025 Tour** 2 October–22 November

Touring to East Kilbride, Ayr, Gartmore, Brechin, Ellon, Crail, Castle Douglas, Melrose, Crawfordjohn, Birnam, Nairn, Lochinver, Glenuig, Castlebay, Lochranza, Johnstone, and Edinburgh

**Spring 2026 Tour** 3 February–14 March

Touring to Glasgow, Tillicoultry, Helensburgh, Town Yetholm, Newton Stewart, Dunlop, Dalmally, Dornie, Stornoway, Gairloch, Newtonmore, Banchory, Fraserburgh, Cromarty, Orkney, Wick, Lairg, and Bathgate

**Pop-up Opera**

**Summer Tour** 31 May–6 July 2025

Touring to Sanquhar, Moniaive, Musselburgh, Cupar, Charlestown, Edinburgh, Milngavie, Coatbridge, Falkirk, Lochcarron, Fort Augustus, Ardrishaig, Cruden Bay, Kirriemuir, Ayr, Kirkintilloch, Glasgow, and East Kilbride

**Emerging Artists Recitals**

26 November 2025, University of St Andrews

28 November, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

4 December, University of Glasgow

**The Orchestra of Scottish Opera**

**Dundee Choral Union**

Caird Hall, Dundee

14 December 2025

22 March 2026

**City of Glasgow Chorus Christmas Cracker**

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

21 December 2025

**Ayr Arts Guild**

Ayr Town Hall

4 February 2026

**Edinburgh Royal Choral Union**

Usher Hall, Edinburgh

15 March 2026