

**ROYAL OPERA HOUSE ANNOUNCES PIONEERING INITIATIVES TO  
REACH WIDER & MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES IN THE UK AND  
WORLDWIDE**

Three distinct initiatives to further the reach for new audiences are announced by the Royal Opera House today as part of an audience engagement strategy committed to ensuring that opera, ballet and dance are available to all, as well as opening the minds of people to new creative experiences through live performance, educational activities, new media and, for the first time, cinema.

**OPUS ARTE TO LAUNCH HIGH DEFINITION SCREENINGS IN  
CINEMAS WORLDWIDE**

Royal Opera House (ROH) owned TV and DVD production company Opus Arte announced today that they have signed an exclusive agreement with DigiScreen Corporation and The Pillar Group, Ltd which will bring the first ever exhibition of ballets to cinema screens worldwide. The agreement includes operas from The Royal Opera and other international Opera and Dance Companies represented by Opus Arte.

The inaugural showings will include the first cinematic performances of ballet, with The Royal Ballet's award-winning production of Frederick Ashton's *Sylvia* with **Darcey Bussell** in the title role, and The Royal Opera's production of *Le nozze di Figaro* directed by **David McVicar**. Later in the series there will be presentations of other titles from the extensive Opus Arte roster. There will also be occasions on which live performances will be made available to cinema audiences.

**Tony Hall, Chief Executive of the Royal Opera House and Executive Chairman of Opus Arte,** said: *"I am excited by this pioneering new direction for the Royal Opera House at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Being at the forefront of the burgeoning digital platform allows us to bring brilliant ballets and operas from the world renowned Royal Ballet and Royal Opera to cinema screens all over the globe. As Opus Arte film more at the ROH, and at other great opera and dance companies, we will have an unbeatable line-up of cinema entertainment for exhibitors around the world. Having experienced the performances first hand, I cannot emphasize enough what an exhilarating experience these screenings live or recorded are, the High Def digital technology coupled with Surround Sound is remarkable."*

In the UK, ODEON and Cityscreen Picturehouse cinemas and independent cinemas are signing up to exhibit this new digital content. Other major cinema exhibitors across the UK and Europe will be announced in due course. The first screening will be *Le nozze di Figaro* on 21<sup>st</sup> April in thirteen ODEON cinemas, with Picturehouse's Season showing in up to twenty cinemas. The implementation of this digital entertainment experience in the UK and Europe will be delivered by Arts Alliance Media (AAM), one of Europe's leading specialists in digital cinema technology, content and deployment. Similar technical digital partners will be engaged by DigiScreen in other regions around the world.

**Hans Petri, Managing Director of Opus Arte** commented: *"In order to recreate the excellence of the stage performances in a cinematic environment, we have been highly selective about our choice of partners. The Pillar Group, Ltd is one of the market leaders in providing top quality alternative content to cinema chains. In turn they are partnered with digital film industry leader DigiScreen which guarantees the highest quality digital sound and vision. We are confident we can provide audiences with the very best digital experience. There is so much more to look forward to."*

**Mark Hooper, CEO of DigiScreen and Michael J. St. Clair, Chairman of The Pillar Group, Ltd** added: *"This is our first foray into presenting opera and ballet; early signs are that there is a huge appetite for this kind of digital experience. Our introduction to Opus Arte through the Royal Opera House has been an exciting development and we look forward to a long and fruitful collaboration."*

**Howard Kiedaisch, CEO of Arts Alliance Media** said: *"Arts Alliance Media are thrilled to be utilizing our digital cinema expertise and strong industry relationships to bring these stunning performances to cinema exhibitors across the UK and Europe. Digital cinema is enabling cinemas to become diverse cultural entertainment centres, not only movie houses."*

**Rupert Gavin, CEO of ODEON** said: *"Our previous experiences of screening operas proved to be very popular. ODEON believes in bringing the widest range of high quality big screen experience to its cinemas at affordable prices. The popularity of opera with our audiences means that we are delighted to be the first cinemas in the world to be presenting an exciting range from both The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet."*

**Lyn Goleby, Managing Director of Picturehouse cinemas** said: *"We have considerable experience of attracting audiences to live opera through our screenings over the last two years. The depth of audience in our cinemas has been proven and, now with these unique productions from the Royal Opera House, we look forward to broadening the material available through pre filmed HD content. We will be presenting films throughout our group as part of a Summer Season of opera and ballet and we are delighted to be an early partner on this venture."*

## DELOITTE IGNITE AN EXCITING AND INNOVATIVE NEW THREE-DAY FESTIVAL

**Deloitte Ignite** is an exciting, innovative and provocative new three-day festival to showcase the very best of contemporary culture and, in its first year, will be curated by Wayne McGregor, Resident Choreographer to The Royal Ballet and founder of Random Dance. Each year a different curator will bring his or her own ideas to create a festival marked by innovation and excellence, reflecting the qualities for which the ROH is renowned.

**Deloitte Ignite** opens alongside the launch of the 2008/9 Season on Friday 12 September and is aimed at London's artistically curious; young professionals who may not yet have considered the Royal Opera House as somewhere for them. Spaces within the Opera House building will come alive with diverse creativity inspired by the senses, how we experience the world and create meaning from it, taking the traditional art forms of opera and ballet as a starting point.

**John Connolly, Deloitte senior partner and chief executive**, said: *"The Royal Opera House partnership particularly appealed because it brings together our appetite for innovation and focus on young people with a commitment to widening access to the arts. This five year relationship will allow the ROH to stage a range of new and innovative performances and reach a more diverse audience. It will also give Deloitte's clients, staff and partners some unique entertainment opportunities and experiences at what is undoubtedly one of the UK's leading arts and culture venues."*

Deloitte's partnership with the Royal Opera House in **Deloitte Ignite** has been critical to the new festival and positions them as one of the most significant investors in the arts in the UK. The full programme for **Deloitte Ignite** will be announced in due course.

## FAMILY PERFORMANCES FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER ATTENDED A PERFORMANCE IN THE MAIN AUDITORIUM

The Royal Opera House is proud to announce new **Family Performances**, made possible by Lord and Lady Laidlaw of Rothiemay, aimed at families who have never before attended a performance in the main auditorium. Tickets will cost from £5 to £20 only. There will be three Family Performances each year starting with a matinee of *The Sleeping Beauty* on Saturday 29 March 2008, followed by *Romeo and Juliet* and *La bohème*.

Initially, booking will not be open to the general public as invitations will be offered to target groups with whom the Royal Opera House has an existing relationship. Some of these may previously have

attended performances in either the Linbury Studio Theatre or the Clore Studio Upstairs, participated in our Education Programme, our community engagement work outside of the Opera House or other partnerships.

Invitees to this first year of Family Performances include the families of those children taking part in the Chance to Dance programme from the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark, Hammersmith and Fulham; families of the schools involved in the Write an Opera programme or Creative Teachers Cornwall; families of those young people involved in Street Stories, the Focus Academy, Voices of the Future; and everyone taking part in the Tilbury Cruise Terminal project in Thurrock. In addition, those involved with the RNIB and the Greater London Forum for Older People will also be included.

Family-friendly matinee performances provide an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to see The Royal Opera and The Royal Ballet perform best-known operas and ballets in the glittering surroundings of the ROH. There is also a variety of activities beforehand including backstage tours and mystery trails to family workshops on the stories of the ballet or opera, and dressing up in costume.

In addition, for the sixth year running, **FIRSTS** returns to the Linbury Studio Theatre - a week of innovative and exciting performances showcasing a variety of art forms by some of the most daring and cutting edge artists working in the UK today. All tickets cost only £5, thanks to the support of the Helen Hamlyn Trust. This programme regularly brings in a young and vibrant audience who are also able to enjoy free post-performance live music.

## **CONTINUING INITIATIVE – BP SUMMER BIG SCREENS**

This year's free **BP Summer Big Screen** performances are *Romeo and Juliet*, *Don Carlo* and *The Marriage of Figaro*, three contrasting masterpieces in the ballet and opera repertory.

Birmingham, Bradford, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Rotherham, Derby, will again have free live screenings through this ongoing collaboration between the ROH, BP and the BBC, as will Trafalgar Square and Canary Wharf in London, Duthie Park in Aberdeen, Ipswich, Sunbury and the Botanic Gardens, Belfast. New for 2008 will be Thurrock, Lakeside and the BBC Screen in Swindon.

### **SUNDAY 1 JUNE at 3pm**

**Performance:** *Romeo and Juliet*, The Royal Ballet

**Locations:** Live to - Trafalgar Square, London; Canada Square Park, Canary Wharf; Chamberlain Square, Birmingham; Centenary Square Terrace, Bradford; Market Place, Derby; Queen Victoria Square, Hull; Millennium Square, Leeds; Exchange Square, Manchester; All Saints' Square, Rotherham, Swindon; Wharf Green; Christchurch Park, Ipswich.

### **THURSDAY 3 JULY at 6pm**

**Performance:** *Don Carlo*, The Royal Opera

**Locations:** Live to Trafalgar Square, London; Canada Square Park, Canary Wharf and Clayton Square, Liverpool.

### **WEDNESDAY 16 JULY at 7pm**

**Performance:** *The Marriage of Figaro*, The Royal Opera

**Locations:** Live to Trafalgar Square, London; Canada Square Park, Canary Wharf; BP Chertsey Road, Sunbury; BP Duthie Park, Aberdeen; Lakeside, Thurrock and Botanic Gardens, Belfast; Clayton Square Liverpool.

## **PRICING**

Overall, this year, more than half the tickets available throughout the Season will cost £50 or below. Further to that, 40% of seats - 260,000 across the year - are costing £30 or below, 43,000 more seats than in the 2007/08 Season.

We continue to encourage our audiences for new and less familiar opera repertory by charging £30 or below for almost half the tickets to 38 opera performances (a quarter of the Season) including *Die Tote Stadt*, *La Calisto*, *Dido and Aeneas/Acis and Galatea*, *Elektra* and *Hänsel and Gretel* with a top price of £110.

To counter this, top price for three of the most popular productions, *La traviata*, *Tosca* and *Der fliegende Holländer*, will be £210 for the very best seats in the Stalls, Stalls Circle and Grand Tier only. For all other operas, top price seats £195 or below.

All tickets for mixed programmes performed by The Royal Ballet remain at the same prices as the 2007/08 Season with the best seats at £55. Top price for *Swan Lake* rises to £110 with top price for all other full length ballets £97 or below.

The Paul Hamlyn Club continues to provide 20 tickets at subsidized prices for each main stage performance throughout the year. Prices are £20 for opera and £12 for ballet. Since its inception three years ago, almost 6,000 people have benefited from the scheme.

The Student Standby scheme continues to flourish with more than 19,000 students now registered to receive email or text alerts for the £10 Student Standby tickets sold for performances at the last minute.

In the 2008/09 Season, there will be 156 performances by The Royal Opera and 135 performances by The Royal Ballet.

The seating capacity of the main auditorium is 2257 and with some re-configuring of price bands in the Amphitheatre, 180 seats in that section move to a lower price band – more than a quarter of the available seats in that area.

More than 44,000 tickets will be available for performances in other spaces within the Opera House ranging from £6 to £28.50 including chamber operas by The Royal Opera in the Linbury Studio Theatre. In addition, there are more than 11,000 free tickets for daytime performances.

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